



2014:36

Sida Decentralised Evaluation

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Review of the Partnership Cooperation between the Swedish Board of Agriculture and the Georgian National Food Agency 2011-2014

Final Report

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**Final Report
July 2014**

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Dr Jonathan Bell**

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The views and interpretations expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida.

Sida Decentralised Evaluation 2014:36

Commissioned by the Embassy of Sweden in Georgia

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Date of final report: July 2014

Published by Citat 2014

Art. no. Sida61765en

urn:nbn:se:sida-61765en

This publication can be downloaded from: <http://www.sida.se/publications>

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

AA	Association Agreement
CBA-G	Capacity Building Agriculture Georgia
CIB	Comprehensive Institution Building Programme
CVO	Chief Veterinary Officer
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DCFTA	Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement
DoW	Description of Work
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
EUD	European Union Delegation
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organisation
GNFA	Georgian National Food Agency
HACCP	Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point
ISO	International Organisation for Standardisation
IT	Information Technology
LEPL	Legal Entity of Public Law in Georgia
M€	Million Euro
MSEK	Million Swedish Krona
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OIE	Office International des Epizooties
RQUEST	Formal Risk Analysis Process
SBA	Swedish Board of Agriculture
SC	Steering Committee
SEK	Swedish Krona
SNFA	Swedish National Food Agency
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
TAIEX	Technical Assistance and Information Exchange Instrument of the EU
TB	Tuberculosis
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
WHO	World Health Organisation
WP	Work Package
€	Euro

Preface

This review of the “Partnership Cooperation between the Georgian National Food Agency (GNFA) and the Swedish Board of Agriculture (SBA)” was commissioned by Sida’s Eurolatin/EAST department in collaboration with the Embassy of Sweden in Georgia. Indevelop undertook the review through Sida’s Framework Agreement for Reviews and Evaluations.

The review was conducted between March and June 2014 with field work carried out in Georgia in April. The review team was led by Vera Devine (a member of Indevelop’s core team of professional evaluators) and sector expertise was provided by Dr Jonathan Bell. Ana Dekanosidze provided logistical and language support during the team’s in-country work in Georgia. Dr Ian Christoplos provided quality control while Jessica Rothman managed the evaluation process.

A draft report was shared with all the stakeholders for comments before the report was finalised.

Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of a review of the “Partnership Cooperation between the Georgian National Food Agency (GNFA) and the Swedish Board of Agriculture (SBA).” The project—which has a financial envelope of MSEK 29.9—started in September 2011, and is planned to end in December 2014.

The project has two overall development objectives: a) “to ensure an environment in which a robust food safety system can be established and sustained in Georgia in line with EU and international standards” and b) “to strengthen the GNFA’s administrative capacities, thus ensuring dynamic market development.”

The review was conducted between March and July 2014. Work comprised a desk review of project documents; meetings with the SBA project management and the leaders of the six Work Packages (WP) in Stockholm; and a field visit to Georgia, during which the review team conducted stakeholder interviews, and visited one location where the project had carried out infrastructure work; the team also participated in two events organised by the project that coincided with their in-country work. In total, 67 interviews were conducted, 53 of which were in-depth interviews with direct stakeholders and third-party experts.

A significant limitation to the review was the reluctant contribution of SBA project management to the exercise. While early access was given to all of the project’s documents, the review team was expected to sift through a Dropbox that was in excess of 7,000 items. The repeated request for a digest of the most important documents as the starting point for the review was not answered; neither were fairly straightforward questions about the costs of certain activities. The considerable quantity of documents obscures the fact that in terms of substance, this project is underreported: no stringent, systematic documentation of discussions justifying the changes in project objectives is available, nor is there coherent, substantive reporting against objectives. This, in turn, is a function of the lack of external oversight and formal, transparent processes, which characterises the implementation of the project.

The basis for the review is the Project Document, Rev 7.7 of August 2011, and the Theory of Change that the review team established retroactively in the Inception Report. The review team took into account changes that were made to the project as implementation progressed. Reflections by the WP leaders on the progress in the respective WPs helped to fill some of the gaps encountered in the inception phase.

Overall, the areas to be addressed by the project have been, and remain, **relevant**. Food safety continues to be one of the policy priorities of the Government of Georgia,

as is the fulfilment of obligations on food safety stemming from the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA) with the European Union. Both the 2010-2013 Swedish Cooperation Strategy with Georgia and the new, 2014-2020 regional Results Strategy for Sweden's Reform Cooperation emphasise closer approximation with EU standards.

However, several factors blunt the relevance of the project. First and most significantly, the GNFA is receiving support through the EU's Comprehensive Institution Building (CIB) initiative, where the resources available are considerably greater; yet, the objectives of the CIB are almost indistinguishable from the Swedish-supported project. Second, the Swedish food safety system (where responsibilities are divided between the SBA and the SNFA) is different to that from Georgia, so there is no particular added value coming from the specific institutional model of Sweden. The review team has found no examples where the expertise provided by the project reflected the strength of the Swedish institutional set-up as opposed to the individual capacity of the experts involved. All expertise provided could have been procured outside of a stand-alone Swedish project.

In terms of **effectiveness**, looking across the **individual WPs**, an uneven picture emerges. Whilst there is evidence of good progress having been made in some areas, an initial lack of understanding of GNFA's culture and its subsequent capacity to cope with multiple initiatives has meant that progress in other areas has been much slower, or that objectives had to be abandoned altogether. Much of the progress that has been achieved has largely been down to the skills of the individual experts involved rather than as a result of the project structure or support.

WP 1, concerned with the “**Implementation of Laws and Regulations in the Food Chain**”, has made **considerable progress**. The advice, support and training provided to GNFA lawyers as part of this work package has enabled a new Food Codex to be prepared, which will provide the umbrella legislation necessary to modernise Georgian food legislation, and allow its approximation with EU food legislation.

Progress on **WP 2**, which focused on “**Public Administration and Management**”, has been **patchy at best**. A Strategic Vision Document has been produced with assistance from the project; risk analysis principles have been introduced; and help has been provided to improve the functioning of the regional offices, primarily through the construction and equipping of two new office buildings. But little or no progress has been made in improving institutional work processes or introducing a National Control Plan. More recently, work has started on checking the proficiency of microbiological testing in food and water laboratories as a first step in establishing a food surveillance system, but it is too early to be able to say how much work will be required to achieve this overall goal, or what level of external input might be needed.

WP 3, which targeted “**Veterinary Services**”, has been the **least successful overall**. There is an urgent need to train new veterinarians in Georgia and to update the knowledge of existing ones, including 450 private veterinarians who are in the pro-

cess of being recruited to undertake part-time government work. However, very little progress has been made on either of these fronts to date. The **most notable achievement** of this work package has been the **establishment of the position of Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO)** for international work.

WP 4, dealing with “**Systematic Control and Inspections in the Food Chain**”, has progressed well, and overall **has been the most successful of the six WPs**. Ten food inspectors have been trained to undertake risk-based inspections and to be able to train others to undertake these procedures. In addition, GNFA staff have been trained on the best way to inform food businesses about food safety practices and basic food legislation and have already begun to do this effectively as a result.

WP 5, which dealt with “**Civil Emergency Preparedness**”, has made **good progress in the area of institutional risk identification**; however, efforts to build capacity in risk and crisis preparedness and management have so far resulted in only moderate progress at best, because of a lack of progress in improving decision-making processes within GNFA.

WP 6 on “**Plant Health and National Inspections**”, a late (2013) addition to the project, saw most of the objectives dropped shortly after implementation began; it has, however, **delivered a small number of outputs successfully**, namely help with incorporating suitable phyto-sanitary provisions in the Food Codex, the mapping of plant laboratory capacity in Georgia and the briefing of GNFA, the Department of Agriculture, and the Revenue Service (responsible for border inspections) on international trade in plants and plant products and requirements for imports and exports to and from the EU.

In terms of the **overall development objectives**, the review finds that the project has made a contribution in certain limited areas towards the establishment of a food safety system in line with EU and international standards, in particular through Work Packages 1 and 4. However, given the presence of the EU’s CIB with similar objectives and greater resources, it is difficult to verifiably attribute changes to the Swedish contribution. With regards to the strengthening of the GNFA’s administrative capacities, no significant contribution by the Swedish project has been identified by the review team. As an institution, GNFA has made considerable progress in terms of outreach to the public, and transparency; however, these steps have been undertaken outside of the Swedish project.

Both at the outcome level, as well as at the level of the overall development objectives, the project has been, by far, **too ambitious** in its design. This is to a great extent due to the lack of experience of SBA in designing and delivering technical assistance projects in an international context—many of the challenges that occurred during implementation (such as the likely impact of the 2012 elections; the considerable longer time horizon required to bring about reforms; or the lack of absorptive capacity in the GNFA) might have been factored into the initial project design. The lack of technical capacity to analyse food safety issues on the side of Sida was a factor, too;

such capacity might have helped to cull down the initial project to a more achievable design.

Poor oversight contributed to the low level of effectiveness, and **efficiency**, of the project overall: the Steering Committee, whilst foreseen by the Project Document, does not actually exist. There is, therefore, no legitimate discussion and approval mechanism for changes to the original objectives, and external challenge to the way the project is being implemented is insufficient.

Other key parameters of the project set-up were not delivered on, either. With regards to monitoring and internal evaluation, except for Work Package 4, insufficient systematic attempts are being made to capture the impact of project activities, and to use them for learning. And while risks affecting project implementation have been identified at several points, there is insufficient evidence on how these have informed project implementation. Rights issues and gender equality have not been addressed, and there is a lack of appreciation of the importance of gender as a cross-cutting priority in Swedish development co-operation.

Project management insists that it has been possible to run this project without a permanent in-country presence. However, in reality the project avails itself to a considerable extent of human resources from the EU's CIB initiative, thereby actually becoming more expensive than the MSEK 29.9 financial envelope. Overall, there is a substantial problem with regards to the division of tasks and resources from the Swedish-supported project on the one hand, and the EU CIB project on the other hand, which is not formalised. The efficiency of a number of outputs is problematic, such as the scholarships in Sweden for a very small number of veterinarians, or the procurement of services abroad for which a Georgian market exists.

The potential for **sustainability** is highest with regards to the results from Work Packages 1 and 4. There is a prospect that GNFA will be able to train its own staff to a good standard in the future. GNFA now shows a strong commitment to educating and informing food businesses, and food inspectors understand how to carry out risk-based inspections and realise the benefits to GNFA and themselves of doing this in practice. GNFA is in the process of significantly increasing its regional capacity with 58 new food inspectors and 450 new veterinarians.

However, the overall failure to change internal hierarchical, non-transparent GNFA decision-making processes threatens the long-term sustainability of a number of aspects of the project as senior staff is replaced. Although the current government is much more committed on a drive to meet international standards for food safety than its predecessor, there is too much reliance on political commitment to ensure long-term sustainability. There is a need for more transparent, embedded, documented processes inside GNFA. Arrest and dismissal of senior staff on suspicion of wrongdoing, often later retracted, undermines morale and commitment of staff in general, and results in a reluctance to progress to senior positions as well as making the GNFA risk averse.

Recommendation

- The review recommends that the project closes at the end of 2014—there is no justification for the presence of two projects with very similar objectives. Improving the management of the CBA-G at this stage will not be sufficient to justify a continuation of the project given the presence of the EU CIB initiative. Expertise provided by Swedish advisors from the SBA and SNFA in the framework of CBA-G can be procured without the need for a stand-alone project.

Lessons learnt

- There are concerns with regards to the way in which the project is run, and this experience provides valuable lessons learned for Sweden. Swedish institutions which lack practical, on-the-ground experience in an international development cooperation context should be monitored closely. Special attention is needed to ensure that they understand and meet relevant project management standards and adhere to key principles underpinning Swedish development cooperation, such as accountability and transparency.
- For projects where the embassy and/or Sida headquarters lack the technical capacity for meaningful regular monitoring, such capacity should be provided through an external regular monitoring mechanism. This will ensure that the projects are peer-challenged, which will help Sida to assume its oversight functions.
- Sida should rethink how it coordinates with EU initiatives such as the CIB. It is important that where Sweden engages in fields related to EU approximation; such assistance has a clearly defined niche and added value in relation to the overarching role of the EU.

1 Introduction

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT

This report presents the findings of a review of the “Partnership Cooperation between the Georgian National Food Agency (GNFA) and the Swedish Board of Agriculture (SBA)”; the report will refer to the project as CBA-G, which is the shorthand for “Capacity Building Agriculture – Georgia” used widely among stakeholders in Georgia and in the written project documents.

CBA-G has a financial envelope of MSEK 29.9 for the period from September 2011 to December 2014. There has been an understanding among many stakeholders that this is the first phase of a longer project.

The main partners in this project are the Georgian National Food Agency (GNFA) and the Swedish Board of Agriculture (SBA). The GNFA is a legal entity of public law (LEPL) under the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA). Its main responsibilities include food and feed safety, animal and plant health and state control of agrochemicals. Three other government bodies also have a role in these areas. The Ministry of Agriculture provides laboratory services and is responsible for animal health policy; the Revenue Service is responsible for all border controls; and the Ministry of Health is responsible for health policy. However, the overall responsibility to produce safe food lies with the producers, while the GNFA’s mission is to ensure that the producers implement and follow control programmes that will guarantee safe products for consumers.

At the GNFA, the project is coordinated by the Head and the Deputy Heads of the GNFA. The project has seen its main interlocutors change as a result of the 2012 parliamentary elections, when the senior management of the GNFA was replaced.

On the Swedish side, the project partner is the Swedish Board of Agriculture (SBA). The Head of the International Development Co-operation Division is in charge of the overall project management. This is the first substantial technical assistance project implemented by the SBA in a long time-SBA implemented a project in the late 1990s in Poland. SBA considered this project as having been a failure, and did not want to get involved in further technical assistance efforts. Senior management was, however, convinced to take CBA-G on by the project team leader.

Four of the six Work Packages (WP – see below) are with staff from the SBA, while the Swedish National Food Agency (SNFA) and an independent Estonian expert are in charge of the two other Work Packages, respectively.

A Collaboration Agreement is in place, which emphasises the relationship between GNFA and SBA to be an “equal and joint partnership”. At the strategic level, the Project Document is the guiding document; this is translated, on an annual basis, into Annual Work Plans, which are to be developed and agreed in a joint effort between SBA and GNFA.

The project has two stated development objectives:

- a) “To ensure an environment in which a solid food safety system, in line with the EU and international standards, can be established and sustained in Georgia” and
- b) “[t]o strengthen the GNFA’s administrative capacities, thus ensuring a dynamic market development”¹

CBA-G adopts a holistic, sector-wide approach, breaking down the elements of the food safety system into six Work Packages, as follows:

WP 1: Implementation of Laws and Regulations in the Food Chain

WP 2: Public Administration and Management

WP 3: Veterinary Services

WP 4: Systematic Control/Inspection in the Food Chain

WP 5: Civil Emergency Preparedness

WP 6: Plant health and national inspections (this WP was added in early 2013; it was not part of the original project plan).

The 2011 Project Document set the overall objectives of the project, as well as the objectives for each WP. It also set out a system for monitoring and evaluation and risk management. The project is to be overseen by a project Steering Committee (SC), consisting of the Director-General of the SBA, the Director-General of the SNFA, the Head and Deputy Head of the GNFA and representatives of the Prime-Minister’s Office of Georgia; Sida is to be an observer in the SC. According to the Project Document, the SC adopts the Annual Work Plans, and shall assess the performance and impact of the Project in relation to its stated objectives. The evaluation system, according to the Project Document, consists of regular assessment of design and impact using the log-frame model; and an Evaluation Plan for the activities of each Work Package as part of the Annual Work Plan using qualitative and quantitative indicators; baseline data and benchmarks; and performance targets. Data is to be collected through questionnaires; interviews; surveys; document reviews; and other data sources statistics.²

¹ Quoted from Project Document Georgia, August 2011, Rev. 7.7, which is the basis for the review.

² See Project Document Georgia, p. 24.

Initially, the project was to be managed through a permanent presence in Georgia (similar to other twinning-like projects supported by Sweden in Georgia, such as the project between the National Bureau of Enforcement of Georgia and the Swedish Enforcement Agency, who have a permanent Swedish expert in Georgia). A Team Leader, to lead the implementation on behalf of SBA in Georgia, had been identified in 2011, but due to personal circumstances, he could not take up this post as planned.

It was then decided that the project would be managed from a distance, i.e. where the Project Manager, as well as the Work Package leaders, come to Georgia to conduct specific activities in accordance with the project objectives and Annual Workplans.

In March 2014, the project became the responsibility of the co-operation section of the Swedish Embassy to Tbilisi; prior to this, it was managed by Sida HQ in Stockholm.

As part of a package of support for Georgia, the European Union (EU) set up a Comprehensive Institution Building Programme (CIB) in 2013, to enable GNFA to build capacity in its area of responsibility so as to be able to meet EU and international standards in food safety.³ Direct grants to GNFA of M€ 2.4, M€ 4.5, and M€ 5.5, respectively, are being provided over a 3-year period. As part of the funding conditions, GNFA has agreed to add an additional M€ 0.6, M€ 0.9 and M€ 1.1 to this budget over the same period. So far, GNFA have used part of this money to appoint a number of new expert staff, as well as two external experts and to fund, or co-fund, a number of initiatives.

There does not appear to be an agreed protocol between GNFA and CBA-G as to how the two donor budgets will be used. Consequently, there has been a considerable degree of mixing of the sources of funding for a number of activities since the CIB monies became available. However, the GNFA-funded staff and experts, and the CBA-G experts, seem to work well together.

There have been a number of other donor programmes which have supported GNFA either directly or indirectly in recent years, but only CBA-G and EU CIB appear to be active at the present time.

³The areas supported include official controls and inspections, risk analysis, veterinary, phyto-sanitary, epizooties, animal identification/registration, surveillance and scientific research, public awareness including for business operators, farmers and the public at large, stakeholder co-operation, support for private veterinarians, information technology, physical infrastructure, and consumer and food processor surveys. For more information, see Comprehensive Institutional Building Programme, Support to the National Food Agency Phase I, Project Document, 2012.

1.2 THE ASSIGNMENT

A review (the ToR are attached in Annex 1) was planned from the outset of the project. The overall purpose of the review is two-fold. It is to:

- make an assessment of the achievements to date and
- to make recommendations for a possible second/final phase to ensure sustainability of the entire intervention.

The primary intended users of this review are GNFA, SBA, the Swedish Embassy in Tbilisi, and Sida. The ToR provided an initial set of evaluation questions around the OECD/DAC criteria, which were further refined in the Inception Report of the review (see Annex 4).

1.3 METHODOLOGY

1.3.1 Approach

The review was conducted between March and July 2014. Work comprised a desk review of project documents; meetings, in March 2014, were held with Sida and with the SBA project management and the leaders of the six Work Packages (WP) in Stockholm⁴ during the Inception Phase of the review.

An Inception Report contained refined evaluation questions based on the initial questions framed by the ToR, and was approved by Sida in early April 2014. The Inception Report also retroactively established a Theory of Change (ToC) for the project: in the Project Document (Rev 7.7 of August 2011) activities, outputs, and outcomes had been conflated, and the review team needed to establish a clear initial logic on which to base the assessment. So, while the Project Document is the basis for the review, the interventions laid out there were disentangled into a more logical sequence. The review team took into account changes that were made to the project as implementation progressed. Reflections by the WP leaders on the progress in the respective WPs—drawn up as part of an internal stocktaking exercise aimed at informing a future phase of the project—helped to fill some information gaps encountered in the inception phase.

The review team visited Georgia from 7 April to 16 April 2014. During the field visit, the team conducted stakeholder interviews based on the evaluation questions formulated in the Inception Report. During an on-site visit to the GNFA Regional Office in Telavi, where the project had carried out infrastructure work, the reviewers visited the

⁴ Repeat interviews were held with the leaders of WP 2 and 4, as the review team's in-country mission coincided with activities of the two WP in Georgia.

old and new office buildings; the head of the Regional Office also organised an ad-hoc visit to one of the local slaughterhouses, which was guided by a GNFA veterinarian, and which was useful to appreciate the working conditions in the meat industry. The team was also given a tour by the Head of the Food Safety Department of the “Smart” supermarket chain, which provided insight into the challenges faced by food businesses with regards to sourcing safe products from local suppliers, as well as gaining first-hand information on the interaction between food businesses and the GNFA. One of the stakeholder interviews took place on a family farm; this, too, provided useful perspectives on the type of challenges faced by producers. The team further sat in on two events organised by the project that coincided with their in-country work: a lab-testing event that was part of Work Package 2, and a training seminar for kitchen staff of pre-school childcare institutions that was part of Work Package 4; the reviewers conducted 13 short exit interviews with participants of both events.

Stakeholders were mainly drawn from four groups: those that were directly involved in the project (SBA project management and WP leaders; GNFA staff, both present and former); stakeholders working with the EU’s CIB project; third party experts (donors/international organisations); and local civil society, as well as local businesses and food operators having direct exposure to the work of GNFA. In total, 67 interviews (see Annex 4) were conducted, 53 of which were in-depth interviews, which lasted between 45 minutes and 2 hours each.

Comments on the draft report were received from SBA, Sida/Swedish Embassy, and the European Union Delegation to Georgia. Where the review team agreed with the comments (in a very limited number of cases), changes were incorporated into this final version.

1.3.2 Limitations

Two main limitations affected the review, which will be discussed below. The first limitation concerns the contribution of the SBA project management to this exercise which can, unfortunately, only be described as very reluctant. The second limitation stems from the lack of formal processes throughout the implementation of the project.

With regard to the first limitation, the review team was given early access to all of the project’s files- a Dropbox containing in excess of 7,000 items. But access does not automatically mean openness, nor transparency. Given the nature of this exercise- a review, not an audit- the team made repeated requests for a digest of the most important documents that the reviewers should use as a starting point for their assessment. This was, however, not answered by project management. Answers to straightforward questions about the costs of certain activities were evaded. For example, the review team asked what the cost was of each of the Regional Offices that were built with funds from the project; in answer to this request, project management created another Dropbox with almost 200 items, and where at least three files contained financial information, as well as documents containing specifications for windows and doors—detail that was not helpful. The review team reverted back to project management asking for a figure; no answer was received. There are other examples of this

kind. In preparation of the field visit, the reviewers were provided with a list of contacts that CBA-G uses; many of these contacts were incomplete or outdated (this has been documented in the Inception Report), and the review team invested more resources than planned for by trying to establish the contact details for key interlocutors. Sifting through a mainly unsorted mass of documents, including a plethora of documents that are completely irrelevant for the review, caused a considerable loss of time on the side of the reviewers. More significantly for the task at hand, it also results in a degree of uncertainty as to whether the reviewers have actually seen the most important documents to be included in the assessment.

As mentioned above, the reviewers established a ToC during the Inception Phase. A general comment by CBA-G project management about this ToC suggested that they were in disagreement with this approach; however, they failed to substantiate this any further. Naturally, the team has tried to take into account changes that were made during implementation and which were reflected in Annual Work Plans. This is, however, complicated by the continuous confusion of the activities, outputs, and outcomes in these documents, as well as the lack of a formal narrative explaining the nature of these changes, their rationale, and what implications these changes would have for implementation (including individual activities, and budget). For example, in WP 2, an additional “objective” was introduced in 2013, “to support the EU CIB project”. This was not elaborated further in terms of how tasks, and labour or other costs should or would be divided between the donors, nor what the “support” would entail. So, while the Project Document on which the project is based was problematic to start with (hence the need for a retroactive ToC), it did at least attempt to make a (somewhat imperfect) link between objectives to be achieved and outputs. The changes in the project plans in subsequent years, however, just changed the objectives without actually explaining how this would affect other parts of the project (activities; outputs; resources).

The quantity of documents, then, obscures the fact that in terms of substance, this project is actually underreported: a considerable number of changes have been made as the project progressed and although it is understandable that some changes should have been considered necessary in the light of implementation experience, the team could find no documentary evidence that these changes had been formally agreed by the project Steering Committee (which never convened), or by Sida and the project partners and, in several cases, there were no detailed documented explanations as to why these changes had been necessary.

As the review progressed, the team discovered that some of the work in certain of the Work Packages had been reported as CBA-G activities, but was actually funded using EU CIB (or EU) rather than Sida funds (see the individual Work Packages for detail). The team was unable to find any evidence of a protocol setting out how the inputs should be divided between the two funding sources and could not, therefore, apportion the outputs and outcomes in these cases. The team was also unable to determine exactly how much of the overall spend on the various Work Packages had been from

EU CIB funds (including the cost of inputs from staff paid from EU CIB monies) as this, too, does not seem to have been documented.

2 Findings

2.1 RELEVANCE

The areas the project aimed to address through the Work Packages have been, and remain relevant. Food safety continues to be one of the policy priorities of the Government of Georgia, as is the fulfilment of obligations on food safety stemming from the DCFTA between Georgia and the European Union. Both 2010-2013 Swedish Cooperation Strategy with Georgia and the new, 2014-2020 regional Results Strategy for Sweden's Reform Cooperation emphasise closer approximation with EU standards.

Awareness of food safety has risen among the public, as has the Georgian government's commitment to address it. Stakeholders interviewed for the review confirmed that the profile of the GNFA, too, has become more recognisable. A recent recruitment drive saw between 40 and 80 applicants per position. This is an indication of the GNFA being an attractive employer. But it could also be a reflection of the high political priority food safety is perceived to have, and the applicants' conclusion that the GNFA will therefore be a reliable employer in the foreseeable future in a job market with few employment opportunities, and with the constant risk of public sector service cuts affecting positions.

However, although a good start has been made by GNFA to enable Georgia to meet EU and international standards in food safety and animal and phyto-sanitary health, much remains to be done. Georgia has significant animal health problems including high levels of rabies, brucellosis, tuberculosis and anthrax, and an underdeveloped agriculture sector that means that some 80% of food is currently imported. When the present government came into office in 2012, few food inspections were being carried out and none of these were risk-based. In addition, according to GNFA, the average age of all veterinarians was over sixty, as few had qualified since the Soviet era, and only a small number were engaged in government work. With the help of donor inputs, GNFA is now making significant efforts to strengthen its food, veterinary and phyto-sanitary legislation, improve its food inspection arrangements, strengthen its veterinary and phyto-sanitary capabilities and tackle the animal health problems, but given the low base that existed in 2012, it will take a number of years to complete the EU approximation process and bring things up to international standards.

Two key factors blunt the relevance of the present CBA-G project.

First, the GNFA is receiving support through the EU's Comprehensive Institution Building Initiative (CIB—see section 2 above). The CIB's resources are considerably greater; yet the objectives of the CIB are almost indistinguishable from the Swedish

supported project. Whatever CBA-G is doing could presumably easily be absorbed by CIB, and in many cases (see discussion below on the WP findings) CIB is planning to continue follow-up work in those areas where CBA-G has made an initial effort.

Not all stakeholders inside GNFA were able to identify CBA-G as a separate effort with a separate management structure, and assumed that various activities were carried out under EU-CIB. There is no clearly spelled out division of tasks between the two efforts that would make it possible to assess what the specific value-added is of the Swedish-supported project.

Second, the food safety model as practised in Sweden does not seem to lend itself to providing an appropriate model: in Sweden, responsibilities are divided between the SBA and the SNFA, while Georgia has, by-and-large, opted for a more integrated institutional set-up. There is, thus no specific Swedish value-added, for the GNFA, either, that could justify the presence of a separate project in parallel to the EU CIB. The review team has found no evidence that expertise provided by CBA-G was a reflection of the institutional strength of the Swedish side as opposed to the individual capacity of the experts involved, and which could not have been procured outside of a stand-alone (similar to the way in which CIB procures expertise from relevant EU member institutions), separate effort.

2.2 EFFECTIVENESS

2.2.1 Results per Work Package

i. Background

The CBA-G project is divided into six work packages. Five of these were set out in the project commissioning document, Project Document Georgia, Rev 7.7, dated 29 August 2011, in the form of a series of objectives, expected outputs and outcomes, and plans of activities. These covered the following areas:

- Implementation of Laws and Regulations in the Food-Chain (WP1)
- Public Administration and Management (WP2)
- Veterinary Services (WP3)
- Systematic Control/Inspection in the Food-Chain (WP4)
- Civil Emergency Preparedness (WP5)

A sixth work package was added in 2013, which covers the additional area:

- Plant health and national inspections (WP6)

The following section discusses the achievement of the objectives of the individual Work Packages, based on the ToC established in the Inception Report, and taking into account the changes that were made as implementation progressed.

ii. *Work Package 1 - Implementation of Laws and Regulations in the Food-Chain*

Summary of outputs and outcomes set out in Project Document Georgia, Rev 7.7		
Outputs	Short-Term Outcomes <i>GNFA has strengthened administrative capacities</i>	Medium-term Outcomes
Recommendations on regulatory improvements such as clearly defined responsibilities on local, regional and national levels Staff trained	GNFA staff in charge has the knowledge + skills to interpret, analyse and implement the new Codex Improved regulations with increased legal certainty allowing for stringent but flexible implementation in line with the EU and international standards Better functional cooperation between the GNFA and all stakeholders based on new legal requirements	Implementation of the new Codex in the approximation process of national regulation with EU and international legislation and standards Increased legal certainty by stringent but flexible implementation of the Codex requirement, general increased awareness and acknowledgement of food safety matters.

Viewed as a whole, the review team considers that this Work Package—which is led by a legal expert from the SBA, has made significant progress since the inception of the project in 2011. Although some small changes were made to the original objectives at the commencement of the project, the team does not consider these to be materially significant as far as this review is concerned.

A particular focus of this Work Package over the period 2011-14 has been the strengthening of GNFA legal capacity and expertise to enable the drafting of a new Food Codex. This will provide the umbrella legislation necessary to modernise Georgian food legislation and allow its subsequent approximation with EU statutes. The original Codex approved by the Georgian Parliament in May 2012 did not take into account comments from the European Commission and other stakeholders, and the present Georgian government considered that significant modifications were required to enable the necessary steps to be taken to fully approximate Georgian laws with relevant EU legislation. The advice, support and training provided to GNFA lawyers as part of this Work Package has enabled a new Codex to be prepared to meet this need, and this has recently been approved by the Georgian Parliament. In reaching this point, GNFA followed an open process by consulting extensively with stakeholders, including NGOs and academics, as the drafting progressed.

The expertise provided under this work package over the three years of the project was also supplemented by two EU TAIEX missions (with the CBA-G legal expert being part of the TAIEX team). Such missions provide short-term technical assistance to partner countries to provide support for the approximation, application and enforcement of EU legislation. Whilst these undoubtedly added to the knowledge and expertise of the GNFA lawyers, they were of short duration (one week each) compared to the CBA-G project.

Although the Codex is vital to the modernising of Georgian food legislation, its enactment will need to be supplemented by the drafting and implementation of a large body of secondary legislation to give it full effect. This process is expected to take a further two to three years to complete. The approximation process, which will be complex and challenging, is expected to take five to seven years to complete from the moment of the enactment of the Codex. There will, therefore, be a need for GNFA lawyers to continue to be able to access expert advice and support for some years to come. Areas that are particularly underdeveloped at present are veterinary and phyto-sanitary legislation. Both of these will require support from specialist legal expertise. There are plans for GNFA to recruit an additional five lawyers (some of whom will be paid from EU CIB monies), all of whom will require training before they can become fully operational. While much of this training will be done by existing GNFA staff, the Agency has asked for this effort to be supplemented by external advice and support where necessary.

In summary, assistance provided through this Work Package has enabled GNFA to strengthen its legal capacity in a number of important areas and it is clear from speaking to stakeholders that much has been achieved. The Codex, however, remains to be implemented and the outcomes set out in the original project document can only therefore be considered to have been partially achieved at the time of the review. Much remains to be done to complete Georgian food legislation and to ensure that it is adequately approximated to that of the EU. Continued access to external legal expertise will be important to enable GNFA to achieve this in the timeframes envisaged by GNFA of three years for the secondary legislation and six years for the approximation process. GNFA has expressed the desire to have someone permanently situated in the Agency as part of any future support in this area and given the amount and complexity of the work to be done, having an expert on hand who can support the process on a day-to-day basis would seem to be desirable.

iii. Work Package 2 - Public Administration and Management

Summary of outputs and outcomes set out in Project Document Georgia, Rev 7.7		
Outputs	Short-Term Outcomes	Medium-term Outcomes
	<i>GNFA has strengthened administrative capacities</i>	
Strategy document pro-	The GNFA applies new or revised internal work pro-	An enhanced and cost-effective public administra-

duced Roles and responsibilities within the GNFA are defined Guidelines and instructions produced for different administrative levels Institutional Implementation Plan based on GNFA Institutional Reform Plan is prepared and submitted Regional GNFA offices are built and running Reliable communication channels are being established between centre and region	cesses as recommended by the project Food safety legislation is implemented expediently Decisions taken at central level are implemented quicker at other administrative levels GNFA regional offices enforce food safety legislation in the regions and promote awareness of legislation among stakeholders Central administrative control is being improved	tion on national, regional and local level forms the backbone of a sustainable, fair and transparent food safety system.
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This Work Package is led by a former staff member of the SNFA, who is recruited, on a part-time basis, to SBA for this project. There is an infrastructure component to this WP, which is led by the CBA-G Project Manager. The review team considers that progress on this Work Package has been patchy at best.

Of the outputs/outcomes agreed in the commissioning document, little or no progress was made on improving the GNFA work processes so as to make the decision-making process less hierarchical, more efficient and more transparent. It appears that this was principally because of a lack of support for such changes by senior GNFA management. A Strategic Vision Document setting out the role of GNFA and its aims for the period 2013-2016 was, however, produced with CBA-G assistance. It was designed and printed in Estonia, and published in 2013. CBA-G was also involved in the development of a new logo. GNFA staff were consulted on a shortlist of four options, drawn from a large number of potential designs produced by an Estonian company. The design finally decided upon was produced by GNFA itself (i.e. was not drawn from the shortlist), and was paid for with EU-CIB monies. A Swedish expert provided by CBA-G has produced a report on GNFA IT needs, but so far, no follow-up action has been taken on this by the Agency. It is too soon to say whether food safety legislation is being implemented expediently as the bulk of this is still to be enacted (see WP1 above). Some progress has been made on enabling regional offices to be able to function more effectively.

As a result of the lack of progress on improving the functioning of the GNFA, the intention to improve the regional office structure was retained, while the other out-

puts/outcomes in the Work Package were replaced as the project progressed by the following:

- the establishment of an effective surveillance system in the food chain in line with the EU system
- the creation of a new National Control Plan setting out which activities should take place, their frequencies and who would be responsible.
- the introduction of risk analysis principles and the clear separation of risk assessment, risk management and risk communication

A rather vague intention “to support the EU CIB project” was also added. This was not elaborated further in terms of how tasks, labour and other costs should, or would, be divided between the two donors.

The CBA-G action to help GNFA to improve the functioning of the regional offices has focussed on funding the building and equipping of seven new offices, of which two, in Telavi and Ambrolauri, have so far been completed. The tendering operation for the other five has also recently been completed. The drawing up of the design and specification of these offices was funded by GNFA, using EU CIB monies. EU CIB funds are also being used to refurbish a building to serve as GNFA’s headquarters. The existing GNFA building will then become the Tbilisi regional office. A protocol setting out exactly how the regional structure will function and how it will be integrated with the centre, including IT linkages, has yet to be agreed by GNFA. Recently, GNFA has begun to recruit an additional 60 food inspectors to supplement those already operating in the regions. These will need to be trained before they can become fully effective. Six GNFA staff have been trained by CBA-G experts to be able to provide this training and to build up a body of expertise within GNFA to enable others to be trained in the future (see also WP4).

CBA-G has identified shortcomings in the existing food, water and human health surveillance systems in Georgia as they relate to food safety, and having discussed these with GNFA, is currently focussing its efforts to help to improve the situation on conducting a programme of micro-biological proficiency testing for Georgian food and water laboratories, both government and private. The results of the first round were expected to be known in May 2014. A second round is planned for later in 2014. No decision has been taken to date on what will be done with these results beyond their possibly being taken into account by GNFA when tendering for laboratories to take part in future surveillance exercises.

However, only one laboratory, that of the Ministry of Agriculture, is known to have obtained accreditation to international standards for food and water analyses so far, and several are still using Soviet-era methodologies that do not meet modern standards. There is no National Reference Laboratory for food and water analyses. It is therefore likely that a number of laboratories, perhaps many, will not be capable of undertaking analysis to the required precision necessary for use in food safety checks, or for surveillance exercises, without being given help to improve. Assessing the capabilities of food and water laboratories, and making improvements where necessary,

is an essential precursor to the establishment of an effective food surveillance system. The review team attended a seminar run by the Work Package leader to brief representatives of the laboratories who wished to take part in the proficiency exercise and to distribute samples for analysis which had been produced in Sweden. They observed the briefing, which was well attended (30 representatives were present) and spoke to a number of the participants afterwards, all of whom appreciated the opportunity to participate.

However, it was apparent from this, and from other enquiries, that a good deal of the administration and support for this exercise had been provided by a food safety expert recruited by GNFA with the aid of EU CIB money. This included identifying and encouraging laboratories to participate, obtaining and booking the venue and receiving the results. The team did not, however, see any GNFA, Sida, CBA-G or EU CIB branding at the event, which seemed to be something of a lost opportunity. Given the mixed funding arrangements, the review team was unable to apportion the outcome of this element of the work package between Sida and EU CIB. However, it has been suggested by the work package leader that further rounds of proficiency testing beyond 2014 will be fully funded by GNFA using EU CIB monies.

No progress has been possible so far on the work to create a new National Control Plan as GNFA has been unable to assign anybody to take the work forward on their side. This raises the issue of whether GNFA has the capacity in its present form to be able to take advantage of all the donor initiatives that are on offer (see also the penultimate paragraph in Section 4.2.4).

Significant progress has been made, in concert with WP4, on introducing risk analysis principles into GNFA and developing an understanding of the need to separate risk assessment, risk management and risk communication. Six GNFA people have so far received training in the application of risk analysis principles. However, the lack of a robust database on the occurrence of food-borne disease in Georgia, information about the presence of pathogens in the food chain and knowledge of Georgian dietary practices, prevents effective risk analyses from being undertaken. This, together with the lack of a reliable, up-to-date, database of trading food business operators and their activities, blunts much of the potential impact of this initiative. It is doubtful whether it would be worthwhile to do any more in this area until progress has been made in addressing these deficiencies.

In summary, of the original outputs/outcomes for this work package set out in the project commissioning document, it was only found to be possible to make progress on one, that of establishing a regional office structure. A good start has been made in the form of the construction and equipping of two new offices and the completion of the tendering for a further five. Based on what has been learnt in setting up the first offices, GNFA should now be able to build and equip the other five without the need for further assistance other than the provision of the agreed CBA-G funding. However, before the new structure can become fully operational it will be necessary to draw

up an agreed protocol setting out how it will function in practice and its relationship to the centre.

Of the three new outputs/outcomes which were added as this package progressed, only one—that of introducing risk analysis principles—has been achieved at the time of this review. It will not, however, be possible for GNFA to make full use of these principles until adequate supporting databases have been set up. The establishment of an effective surveillance system, another of the intended outcomes of this work package, will help by enabling a map to be drawn up, over time, of the occurrence of pathogens in the food chain. However, GNFA will need continuing expert support to be able to achieve this, and there has been a suggestion that future funding for this may be provided from EU CIB monies. As far as the work to set up a National Control Plan is concerned, no further input is likely to be worthwhile until GNFA is able to allocate resources to take it forward.

iv. *Work Package 3 - Veterinary Services*

Summary of outputs and outcomes set out in Project Document Georgia, Rev 7.7		
Outputs	Short-Term Outcomes <i>GNFA has strengthened administrative capacities</i>	Medium-term Outcomes
Relevant stakeholders trained Official veterinarians employed by GNFA have been trained and given equipment and tools Curriculum guidelines for veterinary profession developed Post-graduate training centre for inspectors established Competence profile and DoW for CVO and others prepared	GNFA has a comprehensive understanding and knowledge of the basic structures and processes of a national veterinary system and is undertaking steps to establish such a system An administrative control-mechanism allowing for efficient appointment of private veterinarians to conduct official veterinary work is being used GNFA works closer with the National Veterinary Faculty CVO position is reinforced and there is increased international engagement/cooperation	Attitudes towards the veterinary profession have changed. It is perceived as a secure and attractive choice of occupation. A high degree of sustainability characterises the veterinary service. Knowledge and skills increase exponentially as the personnel turnover diminishes and the recruitment base expands. Well-functioning veterinary associations facilitate advancement of veterinary profession and practices; the involvement of private veterinarians in the execution of state tasks is increased.

Although some progress has been made, this Work Package—led by an independent consultant from Estonia—is judged by the review team to have been the least successful overall.

No changes have been made to the original objectives set out in the commissioning document. Progress in taking these forward has, however, been very slow, initially because the previous government felt that most veterinary matters could be left to the private sector but also because of continuing uncertainty surrounding the status of veterinary training in Georgia (see below). Significant progress in strengthening the veterinary sector is likely to be dependent on the successful enactment of appropriate secondary legislation following agreement being reached on the Food Codex. In February 2014, GNFA requested that a veterinary identification mission from the world organisation for animal health, the Office International des Epizooties (OIE), be sent to help with this.

There is an urgent need in Georgia to train new veterinarians to make up for the fact that very few have qualified since the end of the Soviet era. The average age of veterinarians is now over 60, and their skills also need updating. However, there are no suitable undergraduate or post-graduate training facilities in place in Georgia at present.

Part of the CBA-G project has been aimed at helping to develop the capabilities of the Agrarian University of Georgia to train new veterinarians through the establishment of an internationally recognised undergraduate course. Some progress was made on this at the beginning of the project and CBA-G also provided advice on the development of a new small animal veterinary clinic. However, during the course of the project this university was privatised and it is not now clear whether the Government will recognise veterinarians who qualify there as being suitable for employment by government institutions. Furthermore, the veterinary faculty, which as part of a private institution can decide on which courses to offer and their content, has decided to focus its resources on a four-year undergraduate course which is unlikely to be recognised internationally as suitable for creating qualified veterinarians. As a result, a number of those whom the review team talked to felt that it was likely that a state university, possibly the Technical University, would be asked by the Government in due course (possibly as early as 2015) to establish a veterinarian school that could be internationally recognised. The review team could find no evidence that a postgraduate or other veterinary training centre was in the process of being established. Discussions about this involving a range of interests including GNFA, the Ministry of Agriculture, CBA-G and a EU CIB funded expert still appear to be at an early stage. The timescale and the cost implications for setting up such a centre, even if that proves to be feasible, remain unclear.

However, CBA-G did arrange for three established veterinarians to gain experience on farms in Sweden for 3 months in 2012. This seems to have met with mixed success as those involved, whilst gaining from the exposure to modern farming practices, generally felt that they had spent too little time on veterinary matters whilst there.

There are now plans to follow up this study visit with a further, shorter, one to Estonia in 2014 for four younger veterinarians. The candidates for both these schemes have been, or are being, selected by a committee run by the Veterinary Faculty of the Agrarian University which includes the CVO, the CBA-G Project Manager and the WP3 leader.

CBA-G has helped GNFA to establish the position of Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO) for international purposes, and Georgia has now joined the OIE. However, the position of CVO still requires to be given formal status in Georgia through appropriate legislation. There is also no formally recognised competence profile and job description for this role as yet.

GNFA has decided to greatly strengthen the veterinary services in the regions by appointing 450 private veterinarians to carry out government work on a part-time basis (probably around six months each year) supervised by government veterinarians. The bulk of these will be engaged in animal health work, including collecting surveillance samples (250,000 are needed for analysis, although there is no budget for this at present); carrying out vaccinations; and tagging and registering animals. In addition, government appointed veterinarians will continue to be needed to carry out food safety checks in slaughterhouses (the number of slaughterhouses has increased rapidly since the new government took office, from two to around eighty). All new veterinarians will need to be trained before they can become fully effective. However, it is not clear at the moment how this will be done. Colorado State University has trained some government veterinarians in animal disease matters in the past and provided some equipment. EU CIB monies have also been used to purchase some equipment, including two incinerators, for which CBA-G provided the specifications. It is likely that much of the future costs of training official and private veterinarians for state work will be funded by GNFA using EU CIB monies. The development of animal health strategies and surveillance laboratories aimed at tackling the presence of diseases such as brucellosis, TB, anthrax and rabies in the farm animal population in Georgia are currently being funded by a range of donors, including the USA and EU CIB, but not Sida through CBA-G. However, CBA-G is part of a task force which has been set up to co-ordinate activities in this area.

GNFA has made some initial progress towards establishing a viable veterinary system in Georgia by starting to understand the different roles of state and private veterinarians, by taking steps to create a register of veterinarians and para veterinarians and by encouraging the establishment of private veterinary associations. There are now three of these associations in the regions, with a fourth in the process of being set up. They are recognised by GNFA as NGOs.

In summary, progress on this work package has for the most part been very slow to date. The most notable achievements have been an improvement in the understanding on the part of GNFA of what a viable state veterinary sector should look like and the establishment of the position of CVO for international purposes. However, new legislation is required before this latter position can be formalised in Georgia and a com-

petence profile and job description recognised. Much remains to be done to establish effective training mechanisms for new veterinarians, and for bringing the knowledge and skills of existing ones up to date, including the 450 private ones who will be undertaking government work. However, as things currently stand, it is questionable, whether putting further effort into supporting the Agrarian University is likely to be very productive in this regard. Specific veterinary expertise will continue to be needed to assist and support the drafting of secondary legislation and the EU approximation process in order to ensure that veterinary matters are put on a sound basis in Georgia (see WP1). GNFA has asked the OIE to help with this.

v. *Work Package 4: Systematic Control/Inspection in the Food-Chain*

Summary of outputs and outcomes set out in Project Document Georgia, Rev 7.7		
Outputs	Short-Term Outcomes <i>GNFA has strengthened administrative capacities</i>	Medium-term Outcomes
A majority of inspectors and private veterinarians have sufficient knowledge of relevant food safety legislation to carry out their duties. State inspectors have been trained and equipped. Guidelines on the production of safe food have been produced. Guidelines have been disseminated to prioritised agriculture sectors. Annual Programme for official control has been developed. Routines for collecting relevant data from official control have been elaborated. A yearly national report on official control is published.	The GNFA regularly use methods as recommended by the project to conduct risk-based official control All inspections carried out are based on risk classification and in line with EU-legislation. Inspectors feel competent, sufficiently equipped, and apply their knowledge. Networks of relevant stakeholders function and facilitate advancement of food safety. Guidelines are being used/implemented. Routines are being used in practice. Minimum of 500 inspections by end of 2014. Awareness of incidence of foodborne diseases is improved.	Production of safe food increases as a result of food business operators' and farmers' increased awareness and knowledge about how to produce safe food.

Networks of relevant stakeholders have emerged.		
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Much progress has been made with this Work Package and viewed overall, it stands out as being one of the most successful. The Work Package is led by two SNFA staff members, who each work part-time on the project. The majority of the planned outputs/outcomes set out in the commissioning document have been retained as the Work Package has proceeded. However, the intention to develop guidelines on how to produce safe food, and the dissemination of these to prioritised agriculture sectors, together with a parallel intention to ensure that larger food business operators and primary producers have a sufficient knowledge of basic food legislation and supporting guidelines, was replaced in the Annual Workplan for 2013 by:

- private food business operators have sufficient knowledge of basic food legislation and food safety practices

The review team understands that this change was primarily driven by the fact that GNFA did not wish to develop guidelines as it considered that this conflicted with its role as a regulator.⁵ It was also decided that the aim of reaching primary producers should be left to the GNFA to take forward as part of its plans for increasing public awareness in food safety using EU CIB monies. A further target was also added in 2013 in recognition of the need for GNFA to be able to undertake risk analysis:

- working principles of risk analysis are implemented at the GNFA for a food product category

As part of this Work Package, ten food inspectors have received practical training in risk-based inspections, with the emphasis on slaughterhouses and fisheries products, and have been observed by the Work Package leaders carrying out such inspections to the required standard. All have also been provided with copies of an FAO manual for risk-based inspections translated into Georgian. These inspectors are now capable of training other GNFA inspectors in risk-based inspections, including the new intake of 52, who will all be provided with copies of the manuals. 710 planned inspections are scheduled for 2014 together with 700 follow-up inspections (up from 51 and 21, respectively, in 2010). These will comfortably exceed the target of 500 set out in the Work Package.

⁵ The GNFA considers that issuing guidelines removes the responsibility from businesses of deciding how best to comply with legal requirements as guidelines can be considered to have quasi legal status.

Independently of this work package, GNFA staff have also received training in Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) principles from experts funded from EU CIB monies. It is not, however, clear how these principles will be transmitted to business operators, although EU CIB experts have suggested that one way could be for GNFA to contract twenty private consultants to do this.

A start has been made by GNFA in ensuring that food business operators know how to prepare and handle food safely in accordance with legal requirements, focussing first on pre-school Day Care Centre staff, for which a good database exists. Training sessions are being run by GNFA inspectors, who were trained by the work package leaders, using the WHO Five Keys to Safer Food system. The training material has been translated into Georgian and published on the GNFA website. Two of these sessions, which were organised and run by GNFA without external input, were observed by the review team and the work package leaders and the team spoke to a number of participants as well as the trainers. Assessments were made of the participants' knowledge by the trainers both before and after each session using questionnaires. The impression formed was that these sessions had been very competently set up and run, and the results of the assessments showed that the knowledge of the attendees had measurably increased. All the attendees spoken to felt that they had gained significant understanding of the steps necessary to ensure the production of safe food and, most importantly, the reasons for them. Presentation material used in each session carried clear GNFA and CBA-G branding.

For the GNFA to be able to reach as wide an audience of food businesses as possible with food safety information, it will be necessary for the Agency's website to be improved and strengthened. Plans for this Work Package to provide support for this had to be dropped, as the GNFA did not have the capacity to take this forward.

Although some GNFA staff have been taught the principles of risk analysis as part of this Work Package (and WP2), GNFA has a long way to go before this process can become fully embedded into its working practices. The main reason for this is the lack of robust databases on which risk assessment and risk management decisions can be based (see Section 4.2.2). The conclusion must therefore be that, as for WP2, until progress is made on developing these, there is little point in putting further effort into this area of support.

In summary, the review team considers that this Work Package has been one of the most successful. Two of the original four outputs/outcomes have been achieved, and GNFA is now able to train food inspectors to carry out risk-based inspections, and to inform food businesses about food safety practices and basic food legislation. Of the other two, the intention to develop safe food guidelines was dropped at GNFA's request, and the aim of reaching primary producers is being left to GNFA to take forward using EU CIB money.

The additional objective of teaching GNFA staff the principles of risk analysis has also been achieved, although the GNFA will need to create, or have access to, suitable databases before it can make full use of this.

vi. *Work Package 5 - Civil Emergency Preparedness*

Summary of outputs and outcomes set out in Project Document Georgia, Rev 7.7		
Outputs	Short-Term Outcomes <i>GNFA has strengthened administrative capacities</i>	Medium-term Outcomes
Crisis management organisation is established, educated, and trained. Roles and responsibilities of the crisis management organisation are clearly defined. GNFA has developed and adopted a new or revised CEP policy. CEP-related networks have been established with other stakeholders involved with CEP in the agriculture and food sector.	Awareness and understanding of GNFA and other stakeholders of risks, threats and vulnerabilities in their respective area of responsibility has increased GNFA uses suitable methods for analysis of risk and threat environment; analyses is carried out regularly GNFA has the institutional ability, equipment and tools to respond to crises in the agriculture and food sector CEP policy is implemented, supporting a national preparedness cycle	

The review team considers that this Work Package—which is led by SBA staff working part-time on this project—has made good progress in the area of institutional risk identification. However, efforts to build capacity in risk and crisis preparedness and management have so far resulted in only moderate progress at best. Although some changes were made to the original objectives early on, the overall thrust of the package remained the same.

Initial progress on this work package was hampered by the inability of GNFA, in 2012, to provide the time to take it forward and a subsequent delay in appointing a liaison point following the elections later that year. However, a baseline study of the Agency's risk and crisis management capabilities was completed in 2012, and a limited framework for risk management put in place.

The current GNFA liaison point was given training in ISO 31000 (risk management principles and guidelines) in London in 2013 and is now able to train others in risk management principles. Subsequently, he was taken to Sweden to observe an EU bio-

terrorism exercise. This has provided GNFA with some capacity in exercise methodology to enable it to begin to be able run its own crisis exercises in future. CBA-G also organised a crisis management training day and a desk top exercise involving a vector-borne animal disease in March 2014 as a way of assessing existing crisis management capabilities in this area. As a result, a number of actions that GNFA needs to take to strengthen its capacity for handling complex animal disease outbreaks have been identified.

A formalised risk analysis process (RQUEST) to identify the risks that could threaten day-to-day operations in GNFA was carried out in 2013. This will need to be repeated periodically to maintain risk awareness. The first one has however enabled key departments within GNFA to gain a better understanding of important departmental risks. A report is currently being prepared by GNFA listing the most important current risks and threats from which a top five will be drawn for consideration by GNFA senior management. The aim is then for the Agency to draw up contingency plans for dealing with each of these.

The hierarchical structure and lack of transparent decision making processes within GNFA makes it difficult to institute robust institutional risk and crisis management procedures. This, together with a lack of forecasting, analysis and planning processes, makes putting further external effort into this area difficult to justify at present. In terms of CBA-G, it would make sense to either discontinue this part of the WP, or to merge it with work in WP2. However, no real progress has so far been possible in WP2 on improving GNFA work processes (see Section 4.2.2) and no action in this direction seems to be planned at the present time. Although help could be given to strengthen risk and crisis management in individual parts of GNFA, without changes being made to the way decisions are made in the Agency as a whole this is unlikely to result in an effective crisis and emergency preparedness and management system.

In summary, good progress has been made on the subject of institutional risk identification and GNFA is now able to carry out periodic assessments itself using the RQUEST system. Progress on building institutional capacity in risk and crisis management procedures, and emergency preparedness, has however been hampered by the hierarchical decision-making processes used in GNFA at the present time and it is questionable whether further significant progress can be made unless, and until, improvements are made in this area. There is therefore no strong justification for a Work Package focussed principally on institutional capacity building in risk and crisis management continuing beyond the end of the current period. There may, however, be a case for providing support to develop clusters of specialists at the divisional level, but this could be done by GNFA hiring in external experts as and when needed.

vii. Work Package 6 - Plant Health and National Inspections

Summary of outputs and outcomes set out in the Annual Work Plan for 2013		
Outputs	Short-Term Outcomes	Medium-term Outcomes
	<i>GNFA has strengthened ad-</i>	

	<i>ministrative capacities</i>	
A list of required competencies is prepared An expert in EU plant legislation is identified and hired List of regulated plant pests in Georgia is reviewed List of regulated plant pests not present in Georgia is reviewed The laboratory capacity and diagnostics available in the plant health field is mapped	The Food Codex incorporates suitable provisions for plant health and plant protection Knowledge is gained of the phyto-sanitary requirements for export to EU Plant health inspection capacity is increased through the development of the plant health laboratory of the Ministry of Agriculture	

This Work Package was started in January 2013 in response to a request from GNFA for help to develop a system in Georgia for national plant inspections and the issuing of phyto-sanitary certificates in line with international standards and EU legislation. Two staff from the SBA are working on this Work Package on a part-time basis.

So far, help has been given to ensure that the new Food Codex will enable suitable secondary legislation to be enacted, and the approximation process to be successfully taken forward in the phyto-sanitary area. A report mapping the plant laboratory capacity in Georgia has also been produced (with assistance from an expert hired by GNFA – see below) and this has helped to convince the Ministry of Agriculture to establish a phyto-sanitary facility in its own laboratory. The equipment for this will be funded from EU CIB monies. Two seminars were arranged by CBA-G in the autumn of 2013 on the subject of the international trade of plants and plant products; and exports and imports to the EU. These were well attended, including by representatives of the Revenue Service which has responsibility for all border inspections in Georgia, and helped to identify a list of possible plant products for export to the EU. The intention to review the lists of regulated plant pests was dropped from the Annual Work Plan for 2014. However, a Swedish expert was invited to give a seminar on the efficient and sustainable control of pests by the use of systems of prognosis and warning and a study tour to Sweden for four GNFA staff to learn about metrological stations has been arranged for summer 2014. The purchase of fourteen metrological stations in Georgia and the cost of training staff in their operation is being arranged and paid for with EU CIB monies (see below).

In October 2013, GNFA hired a phyto-sanitary expert using EC CIB money and the main activities in this area are now being taken forward by her with EU CIB funding.

To date, EU CIB funding has been used for, amongst other things, the purchase of spraying equipment, microscopes, etymology kits and equipment for sampling pesticides and fertilisers and to pay for phyto-sanitary staff to attend international conferences and training. It has also been used to draw up an action plan for developing a monitoring system and to make a translation of EU phyto-sanitary legislation into Georgian. Further help with the drafting of secondary legislation and the approximation work will be required, but this could be provided under the umbrella of WP1, or by GNFA using EU CIB money. Overall, therefore, the review team cannot see the need for a continuation of this Work Package.

2.2.2 Cross-cutting issues

The 2011 Project Document committed CBA-G to address **gender equality** aspects during project implementation. The document specified that the project would “strive for an equal gender balance in training and other Project actions”; areas (in particular in WP 3) where highlighted that were deemed to be particularly relevant to the topic, and there was a pledge to conduct “[f]urther analysis of gender equality and what impact proposed activities may have on women”,⁶ which would be presented in the Annual Work Plans. The review team has found no specific evidence that this has been done (this was already flagged in the Inception Report).

Nor was evidence found that suggests that activities adopted a rights-based approach. It has to be pointed out, however, that a rights-based perspective had not been part of the initial project document.

For both gender equality and a rights perspective, the project has not addressed these in any meaningful way throughout the project implementation period, and this may have been known to Sida. The review team has, however, found no evidence of Sida formally requesting that these areas be looked at.

GNFA as an institution has undergone positive changes in the way in which it works with the public. Increased transparency, outreach and accountability to the public were frequently mentioned by stakeholders who confirmed that the organisation has made significant progress. GNFA is rated highly for the information it makes available on its website.⁷ Consumer rights NGOs confirm that there is a consistent follow-up on any food safety concern raised by NGOs or the media. A representative of an NGO—paid for this by the EU CIB—is also part of the recruitment panel for the posts to be filled in GNFA. These positive developments cannot, however, be at-

⁶ See Project Document, August 2011, p. 31

⁷ Although the GNFA is not among the top 20 most transparent institutions in Georgia, according to the Institute for Development of Freedom of Information, the GNFA discloses more information proactively than necessary following the established minimum standards.

tributed to CBA-G. The positive changes contrast, however, with the lack of progress on internal transparency and accountability (as highlighted in the discussion of the results in the various WPs).

2.2.3 Overall results

In terms of the overall development objectives, the review finds that the project has made a contribution in limited areas, in particular WP1 and WP4, towards the establishment of a food safety system in line with EU and international standards. However, given the presence of the EU's CIB with similar objectives and greater resources, as well as the way in which both CBA-G and CIB projects cooperate, it is difficult to verifiably attribute results to the CBA-G.

With regards to the strengthening of the GNFA's administrative capacities, no significant contribution by the Swedish project has been identified by the review team.

2.2.4 Implementing Modalities

There are a number of concerns with regards to the way in which the project works and the bearing this has on the overall effectiveness of the project.

In formal terms (and as described in section 1), the project is a partnership co-operation between the SBA and GNFA. The Project Document sets out the responsibilities of the project Steering Committee (SC), which consists of the Director-General of the SBA, the Director-General of the SNFA, the Head and Deputy Head of the GNFA and representatives of the Prime-Minister's Office of Georgia; Sida is to act as an observer. The SC is to evaluate the performance and impact of the project on a regular basis, and it is the body in charge of adopting the Annual Work Plans during Annual Review Meetings. The Project Document also stipulates that the SC "[...] shall assess the performance and impact of the Project in relation to its stated objectives and provide decisions on project improvement and modifications should it be needed. In case of necessity, Review Meetings can be held more than once a year. Agreed Minutes shall be prepared and signed before a Review Meeting is closed."⁸

The review team understands that the SC actually does not exist, and that changes made to the project have not followed any recognisable formal procedures, which is also reflected in the lack of systematically documented, written evidence about the rationale behind changes, and their anticipated impact on the project overall. The lack of formal procedures permeates most parts of the project, and the review team considers this to be highly problematic in terms of accountability for use of funds. It should not be the discretion of project management to abandon the original project

⁸ See Project Document, Rev. 7.7 of August 2011, p. 24.

set-up in such a fundamental way. Sida should have insisted that the basic parameters of project governance are adhered to—the reviewers did not have any documentary evidence that this has happened.

With regards to the Annual Reports and Work Plans, several stakeholders have pointed out that these are mainly prepared by SBA, with GNFA then signing off the documents. This is not necessarily a reflection of the lack of ownership by GNFA. It is, however, a reflection on the GNFA's absorptive capacity to deal with technical assistance efforts; more importantly, it is a reflection of the working routines that were established in this project. The review team does understand that planning is a real challenge for an agency that is under-resourced, and overwhelmed with day-to-day work: stakeholders involved in WPs have pointed out that dates for activities and events have often to be rescheduled, as GNFA is unable to stick to the originally agreed timing.

The relationship between CBA-G and the EU CIB is problematic. As highlighted above, no formal division of tasks exists, and it is in many cases difficult to distinguish the contribution made by CBA-G to results, as in reality, both projects have worked on the same issues. There is an attitude of “we are doing it together” that CBA-G and CIB have adopted, and while this is positive to an extent, it also dilutes responsibility in a way that is not acceptable for a publicly funded project.

A more general concern resulting from the lack of formal procedures could be summarised as “the failure to lead by example”. One of the CBA-G's objectives was to improve GNFA's working and decision-making processes (WP 2). Yet, the project has to a great extent been run not following its own procedures, and largely, by doing things in an informal way.

Other departures from the Project Document are the “Evaluation system” and the system of “Risk Analysis”,⁹ which the review team considers not to have been delivered on. While there has been some evidence of activities being systematically monitored and evaluated—most notably in WP 4—the review team did not find any documents that would comply with the “Evaluation Plan for activities in each Work package” that the Project Document pledged to incorporate into the Annual Work Plans. Baseline data, benchmarks, and performance targets were supposed to be elaborated in a systematic way, but there is little evidence that that has actually happened. Frequent changes to the project objectives also meant that it would have been difficult to use baseline data from one year into the next, given that the project became a moving target at some point. But it is also a question of how measurable the objectives were.

⁹ See Project Document, Rev. 7.7 of August 2011, pp. 25

For example, in 2012, the project introduced the objective to “Support CIB”. Such an objective on its own is too vague to be measured.

Risks are being collated, but there is no stringent evidence on how this is being fed into Annual Work Plans, as these do not contain a discussion of risks encountered.

2.3 EFFICIENCY

There are concerns with regards to efficiency, many of which are a reflection of the lack of experience of SBA in delivering similar efforts.

Project management insists that it has been possible to run this project without a permanent in-country presence. However, in reality, the project avails itself to a considerable extent of human resources from the EU’s CIB initiative. For example, for the April 2014 lab-testing event, discussed above under WP2, CIB had provided five working days of support to organise and facilitate said event, and there was an understanding that follow-up input would also be provided. This, de facto, means that the project is more expensive than the MSEK 29.9 financial envelope, as it can only run activities tapping into additional resources.

Overall, the presence of both the CBA-G and the EU CIB has considerable cost implications. As discussed above, it is positive that both projects seem to be genuinely working well with each other. EU CIB staff does not appear to question why there is a separate Swedish project. Its existence is a fact, and there have been instructions to co-operate, which is done. There is a lot of coordination, but it is questionable what the net benefit of this extensive coordination is—it would seem to take up a lot of managerial time, while the areas of activities remain the same.

At the time of the review, the project had slightly overspent, i.e. all allocated resources for 2011, 2012 and 2013 had been spent, and some funds from the 2014 envelope had been expended in 2013. Against the background of the patchy results record discussed above, the project overall does not represent value-for-money.

In Work Package 3, a decision was taken to offer scholarships to three experienced veterinarians on a farm in Sweden. It is questionable whether this is efficient in the first place, and what impact was expected from this limited number of placements. A selection committee was set up which allocated these scholarships and which included the Dean of the Veterinary Faculty of the Agrarian University. One of the scholarships was awarded by the selection committee to the son of the Dean. These are issues that could have been avoided; the review team does not know whether this case of apparent nepotism has been reported to Sida; however, this would seem to be a case where it would have been important that project management showed that it was aware of the problem.

Numerous activities were carried out that had no results, but incurred costs. For example, the project spent time and resources on developing, jointly with GNFA, a new logo for the Agency. The final logo chosen was not from the list drawn up in the discussion and was paid by EU CIB, and it is not clear what happened in the process. In this context, a number of decisions made are counter-intuitive: the review team was told that the initial designs were developed in Estonia, however, there is a graphic design market in Georgia that could have been used. A similar argument can be made for the printing of the GNFA Strategic Vision document, which, according to stakeholders, also was printed in Estonia, while this could have been done in Georgia itself. Other outputs were produced—such as the above mentioned IT needs assessment paper—but their status is unclear and it is uncertain whether there will be any follow-up.

Similarly, the review team found anecdotal evidence of a paper having been produced in the early stages of the project, suggesting wide-ranging steps to internally reform decision-making processes of the GNFA. The paper was not available on request; however, this seems to be an example where outputs were produced, yet, where these were not subsequently used by GNFA.

2.4 SUSTAINABILITY

The long-term sustainability of many of the improvements that have been achieved as a result of the project is very dependent on changes being made to the hierarchical system of decision-making in GNFA to make it more process-driven and transparent, and less reliant on the judgements of senior staff whose appointments are subject to political will. As has been seen in the past, much of what has been achieved since the change of government in 2012 can be very easily reversed if the government, or even ministers within the existing government, change. Unfortunately, little or no progress on improving the decision-making processes of the GNFA proved possible as part of the CBA-G project.

In addition, the arrest or dismissal of key staff—as happened in the aftermath of the 2012 elections—on suspicion of wrongdoing, often later retracted, can undermine morale and the commitment of staff in general and create an atmosphere where there is a reluctance of able staff to progress above a certain level as well as making the Agency more risk-averse.

Having said this, there are a number of areas where the CBA-G project has made an input where it is reasonable to expect that the progress achieved will be sustainable, if political will permits, particularly if the EU approximation process is ultimately successful.

Such areas include the ability of GNFA to draft and enact the food safety, veterinary and phyto-sanitary legislation necessary to provide a sound base for Georgia to meet EU and international standards, the Agency's capability to train its own staff to a good standard in food inspection, the capability of GNFA staff to carry out risk-based

food inspections, the commitment and ability of the Agency to educate and inform food businesses about food safety practices and basic legal requirements, and its capability of identifying institutional risks.

Considerable steps have, and are, being taken to build up the GNFA's human resources. There has been a huge response to the call for new staff which could be because the Agency is beginning to establish a good reputation, but may also be because there are not a lot of employment opportunities available in Georgia at present. Nevertheless, the GNFA appears to have had no trouble recently in appointing a range of able staff capable of meeting its future needs. Staff turnover is also unlikely to become a problem for some time, if at all, because of the lack of good alternatives for qualified staff to move to.

3 Conclusions

There are two distinct, although in part converging, key challenges affecting this project. The first is the presence of the EU CIB, an effort that has considerably more resources available while pursuing almost identical objectives to those set by CBA-G. It is the assessment of the review team that the EU CIB initiative is quite capable of providing or procuring the support needed in those areas that CBA-G has worked on. This does not preclude using expertise from SBA and SNFA in the future but there is no need for a separate stand-alone project to provide this.

The second key challenge is the way in which the project has been managed, which raises concerns about a number of levels of accountability, transparency and efficiency.

Accountability: changes were made to the initial project design without adhering to formal, consistently traceable procedures which would have involved a wider group of stakeholders, i.e. the Steering Committee. The interaction with the EU CIB initiative, and the limited delineation of the initiatives taken with CIB funding in relation to CBA-G's activities makes it difficult to determine which actors should be accountable for which activities.

Transparency: the largely informal way of working makes it difficult for actors to assess how decisions are taken and on what grounds.

Efficiency/value-for-taxpayer's money: The review has identified a number of areas that cannot be considered as good value-for-money, such as much of WP2 and WP3, or work done on the development of the GNFA's logo. Of particular concern, the project pays the salaries of some individuals, with little or no results for the time staff spent on the activities.

In retrospect it is clear that there should have been greater insistence on strengthening formal processes, including the role of the Steering Committee as the structure that discusses and formally approves changes to the project. The Steering Committee would have also been the forum to delineate the CBA-G efforts from those made with EU CIB funding so as to make sure that CBA-G can clearly account for its work.

4 Recommendations and Lessons Learned

This review has one overall recommendation regarding the project.

- The review recommends that the project closes at the end of 2014—there is no justification for the presence of two projects with very similar objectives. Improving the management of the CBA-G at this stage will not be sufficient to justify a continuation of it against the background of the presence of the EU CIB initiative. The use of EU CIB funding to embed skilled staff within GNFA, supplemented as necessary by external expertise, is the preferable way to go. Expertise provided by Swedish advisors from the SBA and SNFA in the framework of CBA-G can be procured as part of this but there is no need a stand-alone project.

The review judges that the project experience suggests several key lessons that should be applied in future programming.

- There are concerns with regards to the way in which the project is run. Swedish institutions which lack practical, on-the-ground experience in an international development cooperation context should be monitored closely. Special attention is needed to ensure that they understand and meet relevant project management standards and adhere to key principles underpinning Swedish development cooperation, such as accountability and transparency.
- All projects should be subjected to regular oversight and every effort should be made at the inception stage to ensure that they contain objective mechanisms for measuring progress, including suitable key performance indicators, so that funding bodies can redirect or terminate any aspects that are judged unlikely to meet their objectives as soon as this becomes apparent.
- Any changes to a projects objectives should only be made with the explicit knowledge and agreement of all the principal parties to the project and should be formally recorded.
- For projects where the embassy and/or Sida headquarters lack the technical capacity for meaningful regular monitoring, such capacity should be provided through an external regular monitoring mechanism. This will ensure that the projects are peer-challenged, both in their inception and execution, which will help Sida to assume its oversight functions.
- Sida should rethink how it coordinates with EU initiatives such as the CIB. It is important that where Sweden engages in fields related to EU approximation; such assistance has a clearly defined niche and added value in relation to the overarching role of the EU.

Annex 1: Terms of Reference

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Review of

The partnership cooperation between the Georgian National Food Agency, GNFA, and the Swedish Board of Agriculture, SBA

Sida's case no: 2009-002137

BACKGROUND

The Swedish cooperation with Georgia has been guided by a country cooperation strategy for the period 2010-2013 which has been extended to the end of 2014 waiting for a new regional strategy for the Eastern Partnership countries. The overall objective for the Swedish development cooperation with Eastern Europe is strengthened democracy, fair and sustainable development and closer ties with the EU and its values. Three areas of cooperation have been the focus of the cooperation with Georgia: democracy, human rights and gender equality, environment and market development. The present cooperation is part of the third sector: Market development. The two objectives for this sector are:

- For Georgia to sign a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement with the EU; and
- For Georgia to have the capacity to adapt to the EU's trade-related regulatory framework in at least one area

At the Vilnius summit, November 28, 2013, Georgia initialled the Association Agreement with the EU including the DCFTA. To benefit from the Agreement, it will be crucial for Georgia to advance in the reform programs and EU adaptation. Support to reforms and capacity development of the administration is of vital importance to achieve the goals.

The Eastern Partnership is an initiative to enhance the EU's relationship with its new neighbours: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. Georgia and Moldova have initialled the association agreements including deep and comprehensive free trade agreements with the EU striving at gradual integration in the EU economy. It would also allow for easier travel to EU through gradual visa liberalization, accompanied by measures to tackle illegal immigration.

The EU initiative is accompanied by development assistance in the form of Comprehensive Institutional Building, CIB, to assist building required capacity in selected institutions. These institutions will be requested to develop Institu-

tion Reform Plans for each institution. Member states are requested to give complementary assistance to facilitate the up-grading of the institutions to meet EU requirements. Coordination with these initiatives is crucial for a successful cooperation.

COOPERATION PARTNER

The Georgian National Food Agency, GNFA, is a legal entity of public law, LEPL, under the Ministry of Agriculture. It is responsible for the overall food safety system. This means that the GNFA manages the implementation of the “farm to fork” principle. It is organized in six departments at the central level and 12 regional and city divisions.

The overall responsibility to produce safe food lies with the producers, the mission is to secure that the producers have implemented and follow control programs that will guarantee safe products for the consumers.

Preventing and eliminating major animal diseases is of great importance to improve the economy for farmers and to achieve a sustainable domestic food production. Post control programs and prudent use of pesticides, taking environmental protection aspects into consideration, will be effective in increasing production yields and the economy of the producers and decreasing dependence of imports. The ultimate goal will be a sustainable agricultural sector with export capability.

The present Government has recently drafted “Socio economic development strategy of Georgia, “Georgia 2020”. It states that consistent and effective implementation of the provisions of the EU-Georgia Association Agreement and the DCFTA is a precondition for further deepening Georgia’s European integration process. It has enhanced focus on agriculture development, stressing the importance of infrastructure, increased productivity and competitiveness. Norms and regulations will be gradually adopted to EU requirements.

INTERVENTION BACKGROUND

Georgia has a firm commitment to modernize the public sector and to focus on service delivery, transparency and the rule of law and is committed to curb corruption.

The development objective of the cooperation between SBA and GNFA is:

- To ensure an environment in which a solid food safety system, in line with the EU and international standards, can be established and sustained.

The project objectives are (divided in work packages):

- Implementation of laws and regulations in the food chain
- Public administration and management
- Veterinary services
- Systematic control/inspection in food chain
- Civil emergency preparedness

- Plants (added at a later stage, 2012)

Further details to be found in the attached project document.

In addition to the Swedish support, there is an EU CIB (Comprehensive Institutional Building).

See also the GNFA web-site: http://nfa.gov.ge/?lang_id=ENG

SIDA FINANCED RELATED PROJETS

Partnership between the National Bureau of Enforcement, Georgia, and the Swedish Enforcement Agency – phase II

The project is a twinning like cooperation between the NBE of Georgia and the Swedish Enforcement Agency. The project will focus on two objectives: a) strengthened business operations of NBE in terms of effectiveness and efficiency, and b) the introduction of a preventive approach towards the public at large providing customer support in issues regarding indebtedness or other economic advice to create awareness of the risks entailed and preventive measures to avoid over indebtedness.

Support to the Geo-Stat

The project provides technical assistance to GeoStat and strengthens its capacity via methodology improvement to produce reliable statistics, will develop organizational functions and improve institutional competence to serve to the Georgian society in a better and professional manner. Statistic Sweden is an implementing partner and builds capacity of GeoStat through professional trainings, seminars, and study tours, short and long term consulting at all levels. The assistance aims at preparing the Georgians to meet EU requirements to become eligible for DCFTA.

Capacity building of the Georgian Leadership Community for Improved Decision-making and Negotiation Skills

The project aims to build capacity in public administration, public policy and negotiation within the Georgian public service through establishing a Georgian-language public policy and negotiations training programme; and providing training in human resource management practices across the Government of Georgia.

Management and Training support for Registration and Cadastre

The project is completed and was a twinning-like cooperation to build capacity of the NAPR to provide efficient, transparent and cost-effective services according to unified strategic guidelines and technical standards and with reliable real property information. A new phase may be considered.

Support to the Competition Authority of Georgia

A twinning like cooperation between the Agency for Free Trade and Competition and the Swedish Competition Authority started in 2011. The assistance aimed at preparing the Georgians to meet EU requirements to become eligible for DCFTA. Due to repeated reorganizations and lack of required legisla-

tion, the cooperation came to an end without reaching its goals. Swedish support to the sector may be considered again under favourable conditions.

Support to Civil Registry

The project is completed. It assisted CRA in addressing the civil data integrity through improving data mobility/information exchange among different State Institutions; supporting CRA in improving voter lists accuracy; and helping CRA in creating unified address registration system on a country scale. A new phase may be considered.

THE REVIEW

A review was planned at the outset to take place by the end of the activity period. It was suggested that it should not only include an assessment of the status and achievements to date, but, more importantly, recommendations for a second and perhaps final phase.

The activity period of the present and first phase is September 1, 2011-December 31, 2014.

ASSUMPTIONS

Staff can be made available as well as relevant documents for the assessment team.

THE PURPOSE OF THE REVIEW

The overall purpose of the review is an assessment of achievements to date and recommendations for a second/final phase to ensure sustainability of the entire intervention. The primary intended users of this review are GNFA and SBA to design a possible second phase.

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVEMENT

The main stakeholders to be involved in the review are GNFA and SBA. Other stakeholders that could be subject for involvement are Ministry of Agriculture, farmers, business community as well as the general public.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

Effectiveness

Is the intervention likely to achieve its project objectives as outlined in the project document within the activity period?

Impact

What are the overall effects of the intervention, intended and unintended, long term and short term, positive and negative?

Can changes of attitudes be noted, such as increased professionalism, improved clients' satisfaction, transparency, improved work conditions, staff turnover.

Relevance

Is the intervention consistent with the needs and priorities of GNFA and the policies of Georgia and the Swedish cooperation strategy?

Does SBA provide that which GNFA presently needs? Absorption capacity of GNFA? How beneficial has the twinning been with the SBA? Any constraints? Is the partner relevant?

Sustainability

Will benefits produced by the intervention be maintained after the cessation of external support?

Is the Georgian organization GNFA financially sustainable?

Briefly, which impact is expected on small producers?

Other

Have the present objectives been measurable?

Have the risk analysis and risk management been adequate?

How has the gender mainstreaming been carried out and which are the results?

How has the rights perspective been tackled in the project and which are the results?

How does the cooperation and coordination with the EU's CIB intervention and other donors projects work? Any constraints? Benefits?

Efficiency

Can the costs of the intervention be justified by the results? A general analysis of the overall costs efficiency of the project.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Recommendations shall be based on conclusions from the review and aim at a final phase securing sustainability of achieved results.

Lessons learned.

METHODOLOGY

Studying of relevant documents as well as visit to GNFA in Georgia with interviews of relevant staff and other stakeholders is foreseen.

WORK PLAN AND SCHEDULE

The first visit to Georgia shall take place in April-May 2014, with a follow-up to discuss the draft and results.

REPORTING

A written report in English in draft no later than June 03, 2014 and final report no later than June 26, 2014.

REVIEW TEAM

Call off of framework

Team leader 18 days, category 2

Technical specialist, 25 days, category 1

Evaluator/project manager, 2 days, category 2

Project director/quality assurance, 2 days, category 1

Annex 2: Inception Report

1. Executive Summary

This report summarises the review team's understanding of the scope of the review and the timeframe in which it is to be carried out. The cooperation project to be reviewed is between the Georgian National Food Agency (GNFA) and the Swedish Board of Agriculture (SBA), funded through the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida).

The project's overall aim is to ensure an environment in which a robust food safety system can be established and sustained in Georgia in line with EU and international standards.

The purpose of the review, commissioned by Sida in February 2014, is to make an assessment of the results which have been obtained to date, and to make recommendations for a possible further phase of the project. The emphasis of the review is on assessing the effectiveness of the intervention; its impact; relevance; likely sustainability; and efficiency. The review will be done by studying relevant documents to which the review team are given access; by interviewing key personnel and stakeholders; and by visiting selected locations in Georgia.

The Project Manager and each of the work package leaders were interviewed by the review team in Stockholm on 20/21 March 2014 and gave a commitment to provide written information to the team about the project outcomes that had been obtained by 28 March 2014 and information that is missing at the end of the Inception Phase. This Final Inception Report contains changes resulting from the feedback on the draft report received from Sida HQ; the Swedish Embassy in Georgia; and SBA, where the review team considered that the feedback required changes in the text.

A first draft of the team's assessment report will be produced for comment by 3 June 2014 and a final report by 23 June 2014. The draft report will be presented to all relevant stakeholder in Tbilisi in early June 2014.

2. Assessment of Scope of the Evaluation

2.1 Introduction to the project

Swedish cooperation with Georgia is guided by a Country Cooperation Strategy: the project under review was conceived during the Cooperation Strategy covering the period from 2010 to 2013; a new strategy is in place since mid-March 2014. Sweden's "old" cooperation strategy, into which the project was inscribed, aimed at supporting the country's greater integration with the EU, and focuses on three areas: democracy; human rights and gender equality; environment; and market development.

The project under review—the Partnership Cooperation between the Georgian National Food Agency (GNFA) and the Swedish Board of Agriculture (SBA) 2011 – 2014—falls within the market development area, which pursued two main objectives:

- For Georgia to sign a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA) with the EU; and
- For Georgia to have the capacity to adapt to the European Union's (EU) trade-related regulatory framework in at least one area.

At the end of November 2013, Georgia initialled the Association Agreement (AA) with the European Union, including the DCFTA. To benefit from the Agreement, it will be crucial for Georgia to advance in the reform programmes and the adaptation to EU standards.

The project under review was conceived in autumn 2010, when Sida approached the SBA and the SNFA with a request to explore possibilities for a twinning-like project with the GNFA for a duration of 2-3 years (i.e. 2011-2014). The project was then designed as a result of an assessment visit made by SBA and SNFA involving the GNFA. SBA circulated the project document early on among the donor community in Georgia in an effort at coordination among peers, as well as in order to solicit substantial feedback from sector experts on the validity of the project's approach. Throughout implementation, coordination with related projects in Georgia seems to have been successfully pursued, and coordination seems particularly close with the EU-funded Comprehensive Institution Building (CIB) project, which, too, works with the GNFA.

Already at an early stage, indications were given by Sida that beyond 2014, a prolongation of the project might be considered a possibility, and it is the review team's understanding that the project has always had this potential longer time horizon in mind during the implementation of the current phase. This might have had an impact on the urgency with which objectives were pursued during this "first" phase.

Sida's involvement in the design of the project was somewhat "hands-off"; according to SBA, there was limited input on the technical aspects of the proposal – something

that has been confirmed by Sida, and that is explained by the highly specialised nature of the project, and where SBA is clearly perceived as the technical authority on the subject. This approach seems to be echoed with regards to the capacity of Sida to scrutinise the project's Work Plans and Annual Reports.

The project has an overall budget of SEK 29 900 000 for the period from September 2011 to December 2014. At the time of the review, the project had slightly overspent on its budget forecast, and is foreseeing to adjust spending accordingly in 2014, with all of the remaining funds to be spent by the end of the current project in December 2014.

The project was, until March 2014, part of the Sida HQ portfolio, and has since been moved to be the responsibility of the Swedish Embassy in Georgia.

The development objective of the project under review is:

- To ensure an environment in which a solid food safety system, in line with EU and international standards can be established and sustained.

A second objective mentioned in the 2011 Project Document is:

- [...] to strengthen the GNFA's administrative capacities, thus ensuring a dynamic market development.

The project pursues both objectives through six thematic "Work Packages" (WP), and works through through, broadly, the following types of activities/outputs: trainings; workshops; seminars; building of physical infrastructure in 7 regions across Georgia; study visits; and provision of legal and technical expertise.

Three target groups were identified in the initial Project Document: a) the public administration (the GNFA; the Ministry of Agriculture; and the Office of the Prime Minister); representatives of the private sector ("mainly food business operators, farmers [...]"); and c) private veterinarians.¹⁰

2.1.1 Cooperation Partners

The main partners in this project are the Georgian National Food Agency (GNFA) and the Swedish Board of Agriculture (SBA).

The GNFA is a legal entity of public law (LEPL) under the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA). Its main responsibilities include food and feed safety, animal and plant health

¹⁰ See Project Document, p. 9, section "Target Groups"

and state control of agrochemicals. The GNFA is the only body authorised to supervise, monitor and control the food sector.

The overall responsibility to produce safe food lies with the producers, while the GNFA's mission is to ensure that the producers implement and follow control programmes that will guarantee safe products for consumers.

At the GNFA, the project is coordinated by the Head and the Deputy Heads of the GNFA. There has been a change at the senior management of the GNFA during the lifetime of the project, and the project has seen their main interlocutors change as a result of the 2012 parliamentary elections.

On the Swedish side, the project is supported by the Swedish Board of Agriculture (SBA). The Head of the International Development Co-operation Division is providing overall project management. Four of the six Work Packages (WP) are with staff from the SBA, while the Swedish Food Agency (SNFA) and an independent Estonian expert are looking after the two other Work Packages, respectively.

A Collaboration Agreement is in place, which emphasises the relationship between GNFA and SBA to be a “equal and joint partnership”. The Work Packages are conceived as joint efforts, and where success depends on GNFA and SBA to take equal responsibility by assigning staff to these Work Packages.

At the strategic level, the Project Document is the guiding document; this is translated, on an annual basis, into Annual Work Plans, which are developed and agreed in a joint effort between SBA and GNFA. Preliminary interviews conducted with the SBA suggest that availability of counterparts is a challenge, and that Annual Work Plans undergo relatively frequent changes (and activities have to be postponed as a result) as GNFA is in reality not able to plan with a 12 months time horizon.

Initially, the project was to be managed through a permanent presence in Georgia (similar to other twinning-like projects supported by Sweden in Georgia, such as the cooperation between Statistic Sweden and GEOSTAT, or the project between the National Bureau of Enforcement of Georgia and the Swedish Enforcement Agency, who have a permanent Swedish expert in Georgia). A Team Leader, to lead the implementation on behalf of SBA in Georgia, had been identified in 2011, but due to personal circumstances beyond anybody's control, he could not take up this post as planned.

It was then decided that the project would be managed from a distance, i.e. where the Project Manager, as well as the Work Package leaders, come to Georgia to conduct specific activities in accordance with the project objectives and Annual Workplans.

2.1.2 Theory of Change

In order for the review team to understand what the project set out to achieve, and how it planned to achieve it, the theory of change of the project was reconstructed in

a condensed format.¹¹ This was made necessary because of the scattered nature of the documentation available to the reviewers, and the fact that the project did not use one single logical framework over the entire period of the project, but redrew these on an annual basis.

The below Theory of Change matrix takes as the starting point the initial project document.¹² While we acknowledge, and will reflect in the report, that projects undergo changes during their lifetime, for accountability purposes, it is necessary to assess the projects against its initial pledges.

- As is clear from the table, we have not used the definitions and categorisations used in the project document, as there have been multiple examples of a conflation of outputs and outcomes. Instead, we have interpreted” the narrative of the project document in accordance with OECD/DAC definitions, as follows:
- Activities: actions taken or work performed through which inputs, such as funds, technical assistance and other type of resources are mobilised to produce specific outputs.
- Outputs: the products, capital goods and services which result from a development intervention; may also include changes resulting from the intervention which are relevant to the achievement of outcomes.
- Outcomes: the likely or achieved short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention’s outputs.

While the review will look at outputs, the focus will be the interface between the outputs and the outcomes, i.e. whether and in what way these outputs have contributed to the short and medium-term planned outcomes of the project.

¹¹ For example, we have shortened some of the longer narrative sections.

¹² WP6 has been introduced at a later stage and is not, therefore, incorporated into the table.

Development Objectives /Impact			
- To ensure an environment in which a solid food safety system, in line with the EU and international, can be established and sustained - Strengthen the GNFA's administrative capacities, thus ensuring dynamic market development			
			
Activities	Outputs	Short-Term Outcomes <i>GNFA has strengthened administrative capacities</i>	Medium-term Outcomes
WP1: Implementation of Laws and Regulations in the food-chain			
Studies, surveys, review of regulations, legal advice, workshops, trainings	Recommendations on regulatory improvements such as clearly defined responsibilities on local, regional and national levels Staff trained	GNFA staff in charge has the knowledge + skills to interpret, analyse and implement the new Codex Improved regulations with increased legal certainty allowing for stringent but flexible implementation in line with the EU and international standards Better functional cooperation between the GNFA and all stakeholders based on new legal requirements	Implementation of the new Codex in the approximation process of national regulation with EU and international legislation and standards Increased legal certainty by stringent but flexible implementation of the Codex requirement, general increased awareness and acknowledgement of food safety matters.
WP 2: Public Administration and Management			
Studies, trainings, study visits, surveys, interviews, functional analyses, GNFA internal consultation	Strategy document produced Roles and responsibilities within the	The GNFA applies new or revised internal work processes as recommended by the project	An enhanced and cost-effective public administration on national, regional and local level forms the

processes; infrastructure work, incl. tendering, procurement, building	GNFA are defined Guidelines and instructions produced for different administrative levels Institutional Implementation Plan based on GNFA Institutional Reform Plan is prepared and submitted Regional GNFA offices are built and running Reliable communication channels are being established between centre and region	Food safety legislation is implemented expediently Decisions taken at central level are implemented quicker at other administrative levels GNFA regional offices enforce food safety legislation in the regions and promote awareness of legislation among stakeholders Central administrative control is being improved	backbone of a sustainable, fair and transparent food safety system.
WP 3: Veterinary Services			
Analyses, studies, surveys, interviews with GNFA staff, workshops, seminars, procurement of relevant literature, technical advice, needs assessments	Relevant stakeholders trained Official veterinarians employed by GNFA have been trained and given equipment and tools Curriculum guidelines for veterinary profession developed Post-graduate training centre for inspectors established Competence profile and DoW for CVO and others prepared	GNFA has a comprehensive understanding and knowledge of the basic structures and processes of a national veterinary system and is undertaking steps to establish such a system An administrative control-mechanism allowing for efficient appointment of private veterinarians to conduct official veterinary work is being used GNFA works closer with the National Veterinary Faculty	Attitudes towards the veterinary profession have changed. It is perceived as a secure and attractive choice of occupation. A high degree of sustainability characterises the veterinary service. Knowledge and skills increase exponentially as the personnel turnover diminishes and the recruitment base expands. Well-functioning veterinary associations facilitate advancement of veterinary profession and practices; the

		CVO position is reinforced and there is increased international engagement/cooperation	involvement of private veterinarians in the execution of state tasks is increased.
WP 4: Systematic Control/inspection in the food chain			
Baseline assessments of systems, processes and structures; work-shops; training-of-trainers; translation of relevant material into Georgian	A majority of inspectors and private veterinarians have sufficient knowledge or relevant food safety legislation to carry out their duties. State inspectors have been trained and equipped. Guidelines on the production of safe food have been produced. Guidelines have been disseminated to prioritised agriculture sectors. Annual Programme for official control has been developed. Routines for collecting relevant data from official control have been elaborated. A yearly national report on official control is published. Networks of relevant stakeholders have emerged.	The GNFA regularly use methods as recommended by the project to conduct risk-based official control All inspections carried out are based on risk classification and in line with EU-legislation. Inspectors feel competent, sufficiently equipped, and apply their knowledge. Networks of relevant stakeholders function and facilitate advancement of food safety. Guidelines are being used/implemented. Routines are being used in practice. Minimum of 500 inspections by end of 2014. Awareness of incidence of food-borne diseases is improved.	Production of safe food increases as a result of food business operators' and farmers' increased awareness and knowledge about how to produce safe food.

WP 5: Civil Emergency Preparedness			
Desk and field exercises; gap analysis of procedures; validation workshops; technical advice	Crisis management organisation is established, educated, and trained. Roles and responsibilities of the crisis management organisation are clearly defined. GNFA has developed and adopted a new or revised CEP policy. CEP-related networks have been established with other stakeholders involved with CEP in the agriculture and food sector.	Awareness and understanding of GNFA and other stakeholders has increased of risks, threats and vulnerabilities in their respective area of responsibility GNFA uses suitable methods for analysis of risk and threat environment; analyses is carried out regularly GNFA has the institutional ability, equipment and tools to respond to crises in the agriculture and food sector CEP policy is implemented, supporting a national preparedness cycle	

2.1.3 Reporting and Monitoring

The 2011 Project Document set the overall objectives of the project, as well as the objectives for each WP (see above). It also sets out a system for monitoring and evaluation. A project Steering Committee (SC), consisting of the Director-General of the SBA, the Director-General of the SNFA, the Head and Deputy Head of the GNFA and representatives of the Prime-Minister's Office of Georgia; Sida is to be an observer in the SC. The SC adopts the Annual Work Plans, and "shall assess the performance and impact of the Project in relation to its stated objectives [...]". The evaluation system consists of regular assessment of design and impact using the Logical Model Framework; and Evaluation Plan for the activities of each Work Package as part of the Annual Work Plan using qualitative and quantitative indicators; baseline data and benchmarks; and performance targets. Data is to be collected through questionnaires; interviews; surveys; document reviews; and statistics.

There have been three Annual Work Plans over the course of the project (2012; 2013; and 2014), and three Annual Reports (2011; 2012; 2013). At the end of the Inception Phase, the review team finds only somewhat scattered evidence that this initial monitoring and evaluation system has been put into place and used consistently; this has considerable bearing on the evaluation. Annual Reports mostly report on outputs, as opposed to outcomes, in the respective Work Packages; objectives have, in quite a few cases, been adjusted or changed—something that is not unusual for even less complex projects than the one under review—but there is a lack of concise information on what caused these changes. With regards to the monitoring and reporting against the two main objectives of the project, the review team was not able, at the end of the Inception Phase, to locate such an analysis and discussion. This will be pursued during the evaluation.

2.2 The Assignment

A review of the project was planned from the outset of the project. The overall purpose of the review is twofold. It is to:

- make an assessment of the achievements to date and
- to make recommendations for a possible second/final phase to ensure sustainability of the entire intervention.

The primary intended users of this review are GNFA, SBA and Sida. The Terms of Reference (ToR) provide an initial set of evaluation questions around the OECD/DAC criteria, which are discussed in the next section.

2.2.1 Assumptions

The assumptions as outlined in the ToR are that key staff involved in the project will be made available for interview by the review team, and that the team has access to all relevant documents.

With regards to the latter, while access has been provided to all project documents, access alone has turned out not to be enough, as the quality of the data available is insufficient for the purposes of the review (see discussion in section 2.1.2).

2.1.2 Stakeholder Involvement

The main stakeholders to be involved in the review are GNFA and SBA. The ToR suggest that other stakeholders that could be subject for involvement are the Ministry of Agriculture, farmers, business community as well as the general public. The review team will seek to ensure an as wide as possible involvement of stakeholders; these will, where feasible, involve the stakeholder groups above. At the end of the Inception Period, it is not sufficiently clear to the review team to what extent the project has worked directly with farmers, and the business community. The team will clarify this with the Project Team in preparation of the in-country work and develop selection criteria for identifying informants to interview.

In addition, the review team will solicit the views of non-stakeholder experts (other international projects in the agricultural sector). The EU's CIB project will be particularly important.

3. Relevance and Evaluability of Evaluation Questions

The evaluation will focus on assessing the results¹³ achieved to date and identifying recommendations for a further phase to ensure the overall success and sustainability of the project. To this end, the Terms of Reference for the review provided a number of questions around the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria to be addressed by the review.

The following section quotes the evaluation question from the Terms of Reference, and then goes on to provide comments by the review team.

3.1 Evaluation Questions

3.1.1 Effectiveness

Is the intervention likely to achieve its project objectives as outlined in the project document within the activity period?

The two overall objectives, according to the initial Project Document, of the project are:

- A) To ensure an environment in which a solid food safety system, in line with the EU and international standards, can be established and sustained.

¹³ In accordance with OECD/DAC standards, we define “results” as “the output, outcome or impact (intended or unintended, positive and/or negative) of a development intervention.”

- B) Institutional capacity building of the GNFA.

In addition to the suggested evaluation question, the review team suggests to probe the project's effectiveness through the following questions:

- To what extent can changes that have occurred in the solid food safety system (A) and inside the GNFA (B) be attributed to the project?
- Are the project approach; the division of roles between partners; the planning and working methods appropriate for reaching the project objectives?
- What were the main challenges during implementation, and how have they been addressed?

The reports studied by the review team will provide the basis for assessing the effectiveness at output level, not, however, at outcome level.

3.1.2 Impact

What are the overall effects of the intervention, intended and unintended, long term and short term, positive and negative?

Implementation is in its third year, and it might be too early to draw definite conclusions on impact in terms of the first development objective of the project, i.e. “to ensure an environment in which a solid food safety system, in line with the EU and international standards, can be established and sustained in Georgia”. The review team will assess the prospects of the project of achieving or contributing to achieving the medium-term outcomes, including the potential impact on small producers and other stakeholders in the food system.

Can changes of attitudes be noted, such as increased professionalism, improved clients' satisfaction, transparency, improved work conditions, staff turnover?

This question considers outcomes, and falls, in our opinion, more under the “effectiveness” criterion above. This question seems to be particularly relevant with regards to objective B of the project, i.e. institutional capacity building of the GNFA. The review team has some evidence from reports and initial interviews with the project team about reported changes of attitudes, however, little systematic data that seeks to monitor such changes is available. Also, as staff turnover in the GNFA is high, including at senior management level, changes achieved through activities and outputs might not have been sustained, or sustainability might be threatened. We will be conducting interviews with various stakeholders from the GNFA, and we will be trying to gather information on before/after of those GNFA staff who have been with the institution over the entire course of the project.

3.1.3 Relevance

Is the intervention consistent with the needs and priorities of GNFA and the policies of Georgia and the Swedish cooperation strategy?

This evaluation question is reasonably straightforward. Swedish co-operation in Georgia is guided by the overall objective of supporting further integration of Georgia with the European Union. The project under review is part of the portfolio of projects in the Market Development sector of the Swedish Co-operation Strategy with Georgia, the objective of which is for Georgia to sign and implement the DCFTA (which was initialled in November 2013), and the project rationale is to support the alignment of Georgian legislation and practices with EU and international standards on food safety.

In light of the political uncertainty emerging from developments, over the past months, in the Eastern Partnership countries, we propose to extend the initial question by probing what factors have affected, or might affect, the relevance of the intervention.

The discussion on relevance will also look at the relation of the project to the EU's Comprehensive Institution Building programme (see below comments on the specific questions, in the ToR, on the CIB) given the central role that the EU is likely to play in these processes in the future.

Does SBA provide that which GNFA presently needs? Absorption capacity of GNFA? How beneficial has the twinning been with the SBA? Any constraints? Is the partner relevant?

This set of questions falls, in our view, clearer under the “effectiveness” criterion, and our proposed subquestions will cover the issues proposed here.

3.1.4 Sustainability

Will benefits produced by the intervention be maintained after the cessation of external support?

In addition to the question proposed by the ToR, the review team will probe sustainability through the following additional question:

- What are the key factors (such as political commitment, capacity, resources; effective systems and mechanisms across the GNFA's functions) that need to be in place to ensure sustainability of outputs and outcomes?

Is the Georgian organisation GNFA financially sustainable? Briefly, which impact is expected on small producers?

The financial sustainability of the GNFA will be covered by the above additional question. The potential impact on small producers as well as on other stakeholders will be discussed in the context of the “impact” criterion (see above), where it fits more logically.

3.1.5 Efficiency

Can the costs of the intervention be justified by the results? A general analysis of the overall costs efficiency of the project

This question has, in our view, two dimensions. The first dimension would seem to be the project implementation mechanism (i.e. distant project management), including its monitoring and evaluation systems:

- How does the project set up compare with other possible models in terms of cost efficiency?
- What is the division of roles between SBA and GNFA, and how well have SBA and GNFA fulfilled their respective roles in the project?
- How is the project monitored, and how is the data collected during monitoring then used during implementation?
- How effective has the Steering Committee been in fulfilling its monitoring and evaluation role?
- Where expected project outcomes have changed significantly in the course of the project, how has this affected spending?
- How does Sida/the Swedish Embassy monitor implementation, and what are the key constraints?

The second dimension is how the results of the overall intervention compare to the funds invested. The review team judges that it cannot undertake a rigorous cost-benefit analysis within the scope of this evaluation. As is suggested in the question itself, we will attempt at an assessment at a very general level, only.

3.1.6 Other

Have the present objectives been measurable?

We suggest breaking this questions down into two, and to address these in the context of the “efficiency” criterion and its discussion on monitoring and evaluation systems established and used by the project:

- Have the objectives been measurable?
- Have the objectives been measured?

Have the risk analysis and risk management been adequate?

At the onset of the project, a risk analysis was undertaken, which included a list of 13 internal and external risks. At the end of the Inception Phase, the review team has not seen clear evidence how the risk management process as set out in the initial project document has been taken forward as the project progressed. Further subquestions to probe the adequacy of the project’s managing risks will include:

- How relevant have the identified risks been for project implementation, particularly in light of the volatile project context?
- How have risks being monitored and factored into the planning and design of project activities?

How has the gender mainstreaming been carried out and which are the results?

Initial findings suggest that gender mainstreaming might not have been achieved to the extent planned for in the initial project document. The review team will analyse where the obstacles exist for gender mainstreaming among different stakeholders (SBA, GNFA, etc.) and for what reasons (awareness, commitments, etc.) so as to identify potential entry points for moving forward on this in the future.

How has the rights perspective been tackled in the project and which are the results?

From the initial desk review of documents, there is little evidence of the project having actively pursued a rights perspective. The following subquestions are proposed to assess how the project might have incorporated rights aspects into its activities, and what the potential could be for more explicitly addressing rights issues in the future:

- How transparent and accountable is project implementation, including to the wider public?
- What efforts are made to reach out to those who are likely to be most affected by reforms (food business operators, including farmers) pursued through the project, and how is their participation encouraged?
- Are there safeguards in place to ensure that stricter food safety and quality measures do not lead to discrimination of those producers who face great challenges in undertaking these measures?

How does the cooperation and coordination with the EU's CIB intervention and other donors projects work? Any constraints? Benefits?

This is an important issue to be looked at by the review, as the importance of the EU taking on the leadership role in these areas as part of the EU approximation process. The team will consider the extent to which the project adds value to the CIB intervention, and how it might contribute to the CIB's sustainability. We will be covering these specific questions in the discussion of the "relevance" and the "sustainability" criteria (see above.)

3.2 Limitations to the Review

The availability of data is, at the end of the Inception Phase, the most critical issue for the assessment of results. Although the team was given access to project's filing system, it proved difficult to identify key documents which explained clearly and unambiguously what results had been achieved in a way that would assist a review such as the current one.

The reporting available to the review team focuses to a great extent at the activities and output level, and there are considerable challenges in gathering data related to outcomes. We will be able to assess changes in practices, and, to some extent, attitudes. It will, however, be more difficult to assess commitments and, following from that, prospects for sustainability.

The Project Manager and Work Package Leaders have, after preliminary interviews, agreed to provide further documents aimed at filling this gap. This information will be made available to the review team by 28 March 2014.

The analysis will draw heavily on qualitative approaches – semi-structured interviews with project and programme personnel and external stakeholders and desk studies of reports, evaluations, and reviews. These should enable the review team to make an overall judgement of the contributions of the various work packages, provided that documentation made available sets out clearly the outcomes that have been achieved and these are supported by the results of the interviews. However, there is a limit to the level of confidence that can be attributed to the data collected, and the associated analysis of the review team.

Findings will be indicative of the views expressed by stakeholders and informed experts and the claims made in available documentation, but will not be supported by data that could be collected through a more rigorous process entered into over a longer period.

Attribution of outcomes to Swedish co-operation funding is a challenge in the context of Georgia, and will qualify most of the conclusions the review will draw. Whilst Sweden is the single biggest bi-lateral EU member donor, significant financial support is provided by both the EU and the US. As discussed in section 3.1, the review will include a discussion of the value added of the Swedish project compared to the central role of the EU in adapting agricultural practices to access the EU market and to support steps toward EU approximation.

3.3 Recommendations

Every effort will be made to present these in a form that will enable GNFA, SBA and Sida to be able to decide whether a further phase to secure the overall success and sustainability of the project would be justified

4. Proposed Approach and Methodology

4.1 Approach

The review seeks to be as participatory and consultative as possible. The team will strive to triangulate findings to the extent possible by interviewing a wide range of informants, reviewing Project documentation and accessing information from external observers and sources.

The review will have four stages.

4.1.1 Inception

The inception phase has focused on getting an overview of the available documentation for the review, in identifying the documentation gaps, and in conducting preliminary interviews with the Project Manager and Work Package Leaders. The evaluation

methodology and matrix have been developed which are presented in this report which includes the evaluation time plan and organisation of the implementation.

4.1.2 Desk Study

The review team will make use of secondary and primary data. The assessment of secondary data will be performed through studies and analysis of *existing reports, evaluations, and other relevant documents*. Although access has already been given to a large volume of documentation this has proved difficult to navigate and assess as much of it does not make clear in unambiguous terms what outcomes have been achieved to date, and how these have been measured, as opposed to project outputs. It is critical that the review team receives all relevant documentation from the Project Manager and Work Package Leaders to conduct a comprehensive desk study.

4.1.3 Field Work

Primary data will be collected through *interviews with relevant stakeholders and informed experts* and through observations during site visits in Georgia. We understand that the Project Manager has already alerted some of the project's counterparts to the exercise, and the review team has asked the Swedish Embassy for a letter of introduction that could facilitate the setting up of stakeholder meetings. The Project Manager has provided the team with key project and other stakeholder contact details. The review team will develop a list of those to be interviewed by the end of March. The team will make arrangements for the interviews as soon as possible.

4.1.4 Analysis and Reporting

The evaluation's results will be provided in a report. The report will draw conclusions based on analysis using evidence coming specifically from the primary and secondary sources of the evaluation, provide lessons learned that will be of relevance to Sida, and partners, and make recommendations for a further phase. The recommendations will follow on from the analysis and conclusions, and will be practical in nature. The draft report will be prepared in English. The report will be presented to GNFA in Georgia and to Sida, where there will be an opportunity for input and reflection prior to finalisation of the report. The report will then be finalised and submitted.

4.2 Methodology

The evaluation will be carried out according to the evaluation matrix presented in annex 1, using several data collection tools.

4.1.1 4.2.1 Direction of Work

Using the project objectives as set out in the original, 2011, project document as a starting point, the review team will focus on establishing and mapping what changes the project has contributed to.

After the inception period, the review will focus on the field work in Georgia, to collect evidence through stakeholder interviews. The evidence to be collected is summarised in the matrix below.

Field work will also include the review team participating in two project events, which will allow for a first hand impression on the project working methods and quality of deliverables. The team will also visit one of the sites where the project has carried out physical infrastructure work, tentatively, this is planned to be Telavi. These two events and the site visit, together with available reporting, will be used to develop case studies of the change processes that the project is trying to achieve.

4.2.2 Data collection, sources of information, analysisDocument review

Analysis of all relevant documents provided by the project (project document; narrative annual reports and annual work plans of the project; and specific deliverables such as technical papers, training materials). Relevant documentation will also be sought from other projects and donors.

4.2.3 Interviews

The review team has conducted a briefing with Sida Stockholm, and has had a preliminary round of interviews with the project team (Project Manager and Work Package Leaders); the interviews with the project team were guided by a set of questions that was sent in advance of the meetings. It is expected that another round of interviews will be held with the project team.

The review team will conduct semi-structured one-on-one interviews with stakeholders in Georgia, as well as by Skype/telephone. These interviews will be guided by interview formats to be prepared prior to the in-country visit.

The following groups have been identified for interviews:

- Swedish Embassy Georgia
- SBA/SNFA project team
- GNFA management and staff who has been directly involved in project activities; Ministry of Agriculture
- EU CIB project
- Non-stakeholder experts, i.e., informants with a perspective on the project without having a direct stake in it (such as experts from related national and international projects)
- Participants of project activities such as trainings and workshops; users of regional offices built by the project
- Experts that have been involved in the project on an activity basis.

Interviews will be made with a representation from each of these groups; given the time constraints for this exercise, emphasis will be on stakeholders from the GNFA and MoA, as well as participants in project activities. Individuals will be selected using criteria of relevance, accessibility, representativeness, and spread to ensure that views from a broad base are captured. Interviews will be conducted on the basis of non-attribution. Interview protocols will be kept for accountability purposes; these protocols will not, however, be attached to the report.

An interpreter will be used to interpret from Georgian into English and vice versa, in those cases where the stakeholder's English does not allow for an interview in English.

4.2.4 Analysis

After the collection of data through document review and interviews, the review team will analyse data, draft the review report, and develop the review findings, conclusions and recommendations.

4.3 Review Timeframe

The review, according to the original proposal that was agreed on is planned to be carried out according to the timeframe below.

4.3.1 Inception Period

The inception period began upon signing of the contract between Indevelop and Sida. and the Inception Report will be submitted on 28 March 2014.

4.3.2 Desk Study

The team began work on the desk review of documentation from 9 March 2014. This phase will continue until 7 April 2014.

4.3.3 Field Work

The review team will arrive in Tbilisi on 6 April 2014. Meetings with key players and site visits to GNFA and a selection of Regional Offices will start on 7 April 2014 and continue until 16 April 2014. The team will require support in arranging these from the Project Manager and Sida through a letter of introduction that the team can use to facilitate initial contacts with key stakeholders, in particular those from government institutions.

4.3.4 Reporting

The Draft Review Report will be submitted by 3 June 2014 and the final report by 23 June 2014. The Draft Report will be presented in Tbilisi and time allowed for comments to be received before being finalised. Comments on the draft report should be submitted by Sida, SBA and GNFA to Indevelop by 10 June.

4.3.5 Review Team and Division of Labour

The assignment will be carried out by the following team members:

- Vera Devine, Team Leader. Vera has overall responsibility for the review; she will lead the field work, and will specifically focus on project implementation and delivery mechanisms, and has overall responsibility for the review report.

Dr Jon Bell, Technical Specialist, will lead the assessment of the technical outputs and outcomes, and formulate recommendations for the further phase of the project.

Annex 3: Documents Consulted

Documents consulted during the review

- Annual Work Plan Document, project implementation 2012
- Annual Work Plan Document, project implementation 2013
- Annual Work Plan Document, project implementation 2014
- Annual Report 2011, Capacity Building Agriculture - Georgia
- Annual Report 2012, Capacity Building Agriculture - Georgia
- Interim Report 2013, Capacity Building Agriculture - Georgia
- Annual Report 2013, Capacity Building Agriculture – Georgia
- Capacity Building Agriculture – Georgia, implementing the health message 'five keys to safer food ' in Georgia, by T Axelsson et al, 25 October 2013
- 2011 Capacity Building Programme in Food Safety, National Food Agency, Ministry of Agriculture, Georgia
- Capacity Building Agriculture –Georgia, report from workshops preparing the new inspectors in regional divisions of National Food Agency by T Axelsson and W Heger
- Capacity Building Agriculture –Georgia, Training of trainers, fish part 1 by W Heger and T Axelsson
- Capacity Building Agriculture –Georgia, Training of trainers, the slaughter-house inspection by T Axelsson and W Heger
- Capacity Building Agriculture –Georgia, workshops 29 February – 2 March 2012, by
- T Axelsson and W Heger
- Comprehensive Institution Building programme. Support to the National Food Agency Phase I, Project Document, 2012
- EC Joint Staff Working Document – Implementation of the Neighbourhood Policy in Georgia, 20 March 2013
- EU Joint Staff Working Document, Implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy in Georgia, Progress in 2013 and recommendations for action
- EU monitoring report MR-14591.01, 16 May 2013
- Evaluation Report, Draft 1.0 June 2004. Course in crisis management, 15-16 March, Borjoni, Georgia
- Evaluation Work Package 1. Basis for mid-term review 2014
- Evaluation Work Package 2. Basis for mid-term review 2014
- Evaluation Work Package 3. Basis for mid-term review 2014
- Evaluation Work Package 4. Basis for mid-term review 2014
- Evaluation Work Package 5. Basis for mid-term review 2014

- Evaluation Work Package 6. Basis for mid-term review 2014
- Fact-finding mission report, 4 November 2011
- Financial report 2011
- Financial report 2012
- Financial report 2013
- Food Safety Regulation in Georgia: Assessment of the Government's Reform Efforts in 2012, prepared for the Eurasia Partnership Foundation, April 2013
- Independent auditors report by PWC, 4 March 2014
- Institutional Reform Plan, National Food Agency Medium-Term Development Programme, 2011
- Letter from Director General OIE and FAO Chief of Animal Health Service to Dr Mikheil Sokhadze dated 23 December 2013 concerning the evolution of the veterinary education system in the Republic of Georgia
- NFA Infrastructure Development Needs Document 2011, National Food Agency, Ministry of Agriculture, Georgia
- Proficiency testing in microbiology- food. Instructions for participants. 8 April 2014
- Project Document Georgia, Rev 7.7, 29 August 2011, Capacity building and technical support to Georgia National Food Agency 2011 – 2014
- Project proposal for Comprehensive Institution Building (CIB) submission and potential recourse mobilization purposes. Georgian National Service for Food Safety, Veterinary and Plant Protection
- Results strategy for Sweden's reform cooperation with Eastern Europe, the Western Balkans and Turkey 2014-2020
- Risk register 2012
- Risk register 2013
- Risk register 2014
- SIDA Assessment Memo, Cooperation between the Swedish Board of Agriculture and Georgia National Food Agency, 29 August 2011
- Strategic vision 2013-2016 of Georgian National Food Agency
- Workplan for 2013 for GNFA veterinary department and regional offices and related to see CIB/CBA Georgia project
- World Health Organisation, knowledge = prevention, the five keys to safer food

Annex 4: People Interviewed

List of people interviewed

	Name	Position	Organisation
1.	Mr. Zurab Chekurashvili	Head of Georgian National Food Agency	GNFA
2.	Mrs. Maka Maisuradze	Head of Tbilisi Inspection Division	GNFA
3.	Mr. Koka Giorgobiani	Head of Property Management & Logistic division	GNFA
4.	Mr. Kakha Sokhadze	Head of Food Safety Department	GNFA
5.	Mr. Giga Kurdovanidze	Head of PR, IT & Service Department	GNFA
6.	Mrs. Tamta Mikanadze	Codex Contact Point of Georgia	GNFA
7.	Mr. Tengo Mtvarelashvili	Head of Division	GNFA, Telavi
8.	Mrs. Maia Arsenishvili	Phytosanitary Inspector	GNFA, Telavi
9.	Mr. David Kartoza	Office Administrator	GNFA, Telavi
10.	Mr. Zaza Midelauri	Veterinary	GNFA, Telavi
11.	Mr. Giorgi Mikadze	Head of Food & Feed Inspection Department	GNFA
12.	Mr. Paata Kurtadze	Deputy Head of Food & Feed Inspection Department	GNFA
13.	Mrs. Tinatin Qevkhishvili	Food & Feed Inspection Department Chef Specialist	GNFA
14.	Mrs. Eka Elashvili	Food & Feed Inspection Department Chef Specialist	GNFA
15.	Mr. Mikheil Sokhadze	Deputy Head, CVO	GNFA
16.	Mr. Zurab Lipartia	Head of Phytosanitary Department	GNFA
17.	Mr. Tengiz Kalandadze	Deputy Head of Food Safety department	GNFA
18.	Mr. Zurab Zurashvili	Head of EU harmonization department	GNFA
19.	Mr. Lasha Avaliani	Head of Animal the Animal Especially Dangerous Infectious	GNFA
20.	Mr. David Gagelashvili	Deputy Minister	Ministry of Agricul-

			ture Georgia
21.	Mrs. Ketevan Laperashvili	Deputy Head of Department of Agriculture and Food	Ministry of Agriculture Georgia
22.	Mrs. Lali Madzgarashvili	Laboratory Director	Ministry of Agriculture Georgia
23.	Mr. Joakim Holmdahl	Project Manager CBA-G	Swedish Board of Agriculture (SBA)
24.	Mr. Matthias Schaedlich	Work Package 1 CBA-G	SBA
25.	Mr. Lars Plym Forshell	Work Package 2 CBA-G	SBA
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48.	Mr. Giorgi Kldiashvili	Director	Institute for Development of Freedom of Information
49.	Mrs. Madona Koridze	Consumer Rights Association representative	Consumer Rights Association Georgia
50.	Mr. Vakhtang Kobaladze		Eurasia Partnership Foundation Georgia
51.	Mrs. Lia Todua	Environmental Expert	Center for Strategic Research and Development of Georgia
52.	Mrs. Marcia Merryman	TaADR Veterinary Training Lead, Biological Threat Reduction Program	Battelle
53.	Mr. Giorgi Girmisashvili	Head of Food Production and Food Safety Department	JSC "Smart Retail" (supermarket chain)
54.	Mrs. Tinatin Gulashvili	5 Key Principles of Food Safety Training Participant	Dinner Lady
55.	Mrs. Nanuli Gurjani	5 Key Principles of Food Safety Training Participant	Dinner Lady
56.	Mrs. Manana Gurundi	5 Key Principles of Food Safety Training Participant	Dinner Lady
57.	Mrs. Lali Meliqadze	5 Key Principles of Food Safety Training Participant	Dinner Lady
58.	Mrs. Aza Petriashvili	5 Key Principles of Food Safety Training Participant	Dinner Lady
59.	Mrs. Bela Megrelishvili	5 Key Principles of Food Safety Training Participant	Dinner Lady
60.	Mrs. Medea Papashvili	5 Key Principles of Food Safety Training Participant	Dinner Lady
61.	Mrs. Lali Zenashvili	5 Key Principles of Food Safety Training Participant	Dinner Lady
62.	Mrs. Aza Kakhuchashvili	5 Key Principles of Food Safety Training Participant	Dinner Lady
63.	Mrs. Nino Oqruashvili	5 Key Principles of Food Safety Training Participant	Dinner Lady
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65.	Mrs. Nia Sepashvili	Participant in lab testing event/WP2. QC Manager	JSC "Iberia Refreshments - PepsiCo Bottler in Georgia"

66.	Mrs. Tamar Davitaia	Participant in lab testing event/WP2	Ltd "Aqua Geo"
67.	Mrs. Lile Malania	Participant in lab testing event/WP2	National Center for Disease Control & Public Health



Review of the Partnership Cooperation between the Swedish Board of Agriculture and the Georgian National Food Agency 2011-2014

This report presents the findings of a review of the “Partnership Cooperation between the Swedish Board of Agriculture (SBA) and the Georgian National Food Agency (GNFA)” during the period from 2011 to 2014. The review finds that considerable progress has been made in two of the six work packages: the project has enabled a new Food Codex to be prepared, which will provide the umbrella legislation necessary to modernise Georgian food legislation, and allow its approximation with EU food legislation; food inspectors have been trained to undertake risk-based inspections and to be able to train others to undertake these procedures. Good progress has also been made in the area of institutional risk identification; however, efforts to build capacity in risk and crisis preparedness and management have so far resulted in only moderate progress. Work focused on public administration and management, and on veterinary services has had only patchy results at best.

This very mixed record is to a considerable extent a reflection of the overly ambitious design of the project. The review team finds that the objectives and outcomes planned would not have been achieved in the time-frame anticipated even if the absorptive capacity of the partner institution GNFA had been greater, and the political situation more stable. The review team recommends the project to close at the end of 2014. While there are concerns over the way in which the project is managed, the key reason for this recommendation is the presence of a well-funded EU multi-annual Comprehensive Institution Building initiative at the GNFA pursuing almost identical objectives. This is using a cadre of skilled embedded staff supported by external experts which could easily take forward those areas in which the Swedish co-operation project has worked, using additional experts where necessary, thus avoiding the need for a separate self-standing initiative and thereby potentially increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the external support being provided.

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